

OPINION 8
FORGET THE
BRAG, GET REAL

WORLD 12
BLACK SHADOWS IN HK'S
DEVASTATED CAMPUS

SPORT 15
SPURS FACE WEST
HAM IN PREMIER LEAGUE

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GAVASKAR,
MY FAVOURITE:
RANI MUKHERJEE
14 VIVACITY

Cong, NCP OK Uddhav as CM

Deliberations to continue on Saturday to fix unfinished Govt agenda

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As the talks among the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress over Government formation in Maharashtra remained "inconclusive" on Friday evening, NCP president Sharad Pawar said that there was "unanimity" among the three parties over Sena president Uddhav Thackeray's choice as the Chief Minister. Senior leaders of the Congress and the NCP said they have reached "conclusions" on many issues.

At the end of a two-hour meeting among the leaders of the Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress at the Nehru Centre here, there appeared to be loose ends regarding issues discussed and decisions taken in matters relating to the Government formation.

The leaders of the three parties will meet once again on Saturday to deliberate on the unfinished agenda and decide on when to stake claim for a three-party Government.

Though Pawar said there was consensus among the leaders of three parties that Uddhav would head the "Maha Vikas Agadhi" Government in the State, there was no formal confirmation from the Shiv Sena president.

Emerging out of the meet-



Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge and others arrive to attend a meeting aimed at giving momentum to install a non-BJP Government in Maharashtra, at Nehru Centre in Mumbai on Friday

ing first, Pawar said, "The leadership issue settled now. There is unanimity over Uddhav Thackeray's choice as the Chief Minister. The discussion is going on other issues. After the leaders are through with the discussions, they will address a joint Press conference tomorrow and announce all the details relating to the Government formation."

On his part, Uddhav did not say anything on Pawar's

announcement about the consensus having been reached on his name as the Chief Minister of the three-party Government.

Later, Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut was quoted by a leading Marathi channel as saying that upon the insistence by the leaders of the two alliance partners, Uddhav has agreed to accept the CM post.

Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, who was to leave for Delhi, has cancelled his trip,

anticipating a meeting with the leaders of the three parties during the weekend.

NCP's national spokesperson Nawab Malik said, "Both the NCP and Congress have obtained signatures of their respective MLAs. We can go with the Shiv Sena leaders any time to the Governor and give our letters of support to the Maha Vikas Agadhi Government."

Continued on Page 4

D/N pink fever pitch at Eden Gardens



Cheteshwar Pujara avoids a rising delivery during the first day of the second test match between India and Bangladesh in Kolkata on Friday

PTI ■ KOLKATA

It was a party in pink at the "City of Joy" as India began its tryst with Day/Night Tests in front of political bigwigs, galaxy of sports stars and a sell-out crowd, which ensured that Sourav Ganguly's promise of a spectacle lived up to its hype.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee rang the Eden Gardens Bell ahead of the toss

here on Friday but it was the famously enthusiastic Kolkata fans, who gave the match its character.

After being reluctant for four years, India finally embraced the Day/Night format for Test cricket, following a strong push from new BCCI President Ganguly and Kolkata proved to be the perfect host.

Four days of the game are already sold out.

Tickets are also reportedly up for sale in black market

at five times their original prices, which start from Rs 150.

Spectators, a lot of them clad in pink, thronged the iconic stadium, making for the kind of carnival-like atmosphere that is now seen mostly in T20 games. The last memory of such overwhelming response to a Test was the epic 2001 game that India played against Australia and won by 171 runs following-on at the same ground.

At the BC Roy Clubhouse,

it was a pink carpet welcome for the invited dignitaries, which included the two greats of Indian sport — cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar and Olympic hero Abhinav Bindra — among a host of others.

From the 50-odd grounds-men in pink-coloured clothing to a giant pink balloon hovering over the Eden sky, it was a carnival-like atmosphere that greeted anyone who cared to walk in to the Eden Gardens.

Continued on Page 4

No SPG cover for family of ex-PM, Centre to table Amendment Bill

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The family members of former Prime Ministers will not be guarded by the elite Special Protection Group (SPG), as per the amendments approved by the Union Cabinet to the SPG Act which will need to be ratified by Parliament.

The move comes days after the Centre withdrew the SPG security cover accorded to Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her children, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, almost after three decades.

The proposed legislation — the Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill — has been listed in the Government's business for next week for introduction in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal announced in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

As per the SPG Act, the force provides security to the Prime Minister and the members of his immediate family.

SPG cover is provided to former Prime Minister or to

the members of his immediate family for a period of one year from the date on which the incumbent ceases to hold office, and beyond one year based on the level of threat perception assessed by the Union Home Ministry.

According to the proposed amendment, family members of the former Prime Ministers would not be entitled to the coveted SPG protection, officials said.

The proposed amendment in the SPG Act was approved by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday, another official said.

The decision to withdraw the SPG cover given to the family of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who was assassinated by LTTE terrorists on May 21, 1991, was taken after a detailed security assessment earlier this month.

The Gandhis are now without SPG protection after 28 years. They were included in the VVIP security list following an amendment in September 1991 in the SPG Act of 1988.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now the only person

to be protected by the about-4,000-personnel-strong SPG that is largely manned by personnel drawn from the armed forces of the Centre.

Under the rules, SPG protectees are provided with guards, hi-tech vehicles, jammers and an ambulance in their cavalcade and an Advance Security Liaison is conducted at the venues to be visited by the VVIPs.

The Gandhis are now guarded by the 'Z-plus' security of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) that has also extended ASL for these protectees.

Under the 'Z-plus' security, they are being protected by CRPF commandos in close proximity, besides guards at their homes and wherever they travel in the country.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra had on Thursday dubbed the removal of SPG cover from the Gandhi family part of politics that keeps happening. Besides the LTTE, the Gandhis have also been on the radar of the Khalistani terror groups propped up by Pakistan, according to security officials.

3 Jharkhand cops killed in Naxal attack in Latehar

PTI ■ LATEHAR (JHARKHAND)

Three police personnel, including a sub-inspector, were killed in Naxal attack in Latehar district of Jharkhand on Friday, officials said.

The attack by armed Naxals happened about 8:30 pm when the police party was on-board a four-wheeler near Lukiatand village under Chandwa police station area, they said.

The Maoists are reported to have sprung a surprise attack on the police personnel who were on patrol duty. "Our police party was ambushed and three casualties occurred," Additional Director General of Police Murari Lal Meena said.

Some home guard personnel are also reported to be in the casualty list. The police were ascertaining which Naxal group was involved in the ambush.

Meanwhile, the EC appointed ex-IPS officer MK Das as special police observer for Jharkhand polls after the Naxal attack.

Will curb Capital's air pollution faster than Beijing: Javadekar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on Friday said India is expected to take less time than the 15 years taken by Beijing to improve air quality in the national Capital.

He was responding to a three-day long discussion in the Lok Sabha on the air and water pollution in Delhi. Meanwhile, in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Agriculture Kailash Choudhary accused AAP-led Delhi Government of "creating hype" on the issue of rising air pollution in the national Capital due to "political reasons".

The Lok Sabha witnessed structured debate on the pollution with Speaker Om Birla giving opportunity to all parties and allowing maximum number of MPs to raise questions after Javadekar's speech.

Responding to a discussion on "air pollution and climate change", the Minister said a mass movement is needed to tackle the problem. "It took Beijing 15 years (to fight air pollution). We will take lesser



Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Winter Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Friday

time," he said, referring to the air quality in Delhi.

There is a relation between pollution and climate change, the Environment Minister said, adding that 40 per cent of India's total power capacity will come from renewable sources before 2030. Noting that India's green cover is increasing, the Minister said five times more trees have been planted in Delhi in place of trees cut down for construction of the Delhi Metro. Observing that pollution in Delhi was the topic of discus-

sion in the entire country, he said the "solution to the problem will come only when we recognise the problem."

On measures being taken to control pollution, he said round-the-clock monitoring was taking place. He also said that a ban has been put on use of furnace oil and emission norms have been enhanced. The Government has formed a task force on Delhi's toxic smog and everyday the monitoring was being done by the Prime Minister's Office.

Continued on Page 4

CAPSULE

BILL INTRODUCED IN LS TO OUTLAW E-CIGARETTES
New Delhi: A Bill to ban production, import and sale of electronic cigarettes and similar products was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

PROTEST ENDS, BHU SANSKRIT DEPT REOPENS
Varanasi: A group of BHU students protesting against the appointment of a Muslim professor ended their "dharna" on Friday.

ALWAR POLICE ORDER TO COPS WITHDRAWN
Jaipur: The police in Rajasthan's Alwar district ordered nine Muslim members of the force to shave their beards, only to withdraw its instructions a day later. The original order on Thursday said the nine policemen were asked to cut their beards so that they acted and looked "unbiased".

SHAUKAT KAIFI PASSES AWAY
Mumbai: Veteran actor and Shabana Azmi's mother Shaukat Kaifi passed away here on Friday evening due to age-related illness at the age of 93. Kaifi's son-in-law, veteran writer-lyricist Javed Akhtar, confirmed the news of the death of the theatre and film actor.

Banned notes worth ₹26 lakh seized from Manipur ex-CM Ibobi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After filing a case against former Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh and others for allegedly misappropriating ₹332 crore from development funds in Manipur, the officials said on Friday the CBI carried out searches at nine locations in three cities and during searches at Singh's residence, it recovered ₹11.47 lakh in cash and ₹26.49 lakh in old demonetised currency — a crime with may lead to penalty of five times the recovered currency.

Also, the CBI seized ₹10 lakh old currency from another accused and former Project Director of MDS Y Ningthem Singh.

The agency searched the

residences of Singh and former IAS officers who were part of the Manipur Development Society in Aizawl, Imphal and Gurgaon, they said. As many eight luxury cars, including Audi, Mitsubishi, Honda and Hyundai were found during the searches at Singh's residence.

Singh, the then chairman of the Manipur Development Society (MDS), during his tenure from June 30, 2009 to July 6, 2017, in alleged conspiracy with others, misappropriated Government funds to the tune of ₹332 crore out of the total amount of ₹518 crore which was entrusted to them for the purpose of executing development work, the CBI said in a statement.

Continued on Page 4

Mulayam cuts 81st b'day cake, picks son over brother

Shivpal organises separate birthday celebration in SP patron's absence

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party celebrated the 81st birthday of its founder Mulayam Singh Yadav at the party headquarters here on Friday.

Flanked by his son and party president Akhilesh Yadav as well as senior leaders, Mulayam cut the birthday cake amid loud cheers from party workers and leaders.

Shivpal Singh Yadav celebrated Mulayam's birthday separately in absence of the big brother.

On the occasion, an 81-kg laddoo was presented to Mulayam by SP leaders. Sweets were distributed among the



Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav being offered sweets by his son and party president Akhilesh Yadav during his 81st birthday celebrations, at party office in Lucknow on Friday

workers in presence of Mulayam.

Shivpal, on the other hand, rushed to Saifai in Etawah where he celebrated the birthday of his elder brother as Ekta Diwas and also organised a wrestling competition.

Addressing party workers and leaders after cutting the cake, Mulayam, who arrived here from Delhi on Thursday evening, asked them to celebrate the birthday of the poor party workers.

"You all celebrate the birthday of the poor, and I will also attend it," he told the enthused workers who raised slogans.

The SP patriarch attacked the Governments at the Centre as well as in UP, saying farmers were in distress and youths were unemployed. "Don't tolerate injustice and organise yourself to protest against the prevailing situation as this will strengthen the party," he said.

Earlier, it was said Mulayam would be in Delhi on

his birthday due to the ongoing session of Parliament.

In Lucknow, banners and hoardings were put up outside the party office, which wore a festive look with party workers dancing to the tunes of drums and distributing fruit and sweets. The SP leadership had directed all the district presidents of the party to organise birthday celebration in their districts.

A week ahead of Mulayam's birthday, Shivpal, who is president of Pragatishheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia), had softened his stand towards nephew Akhilesh and offered to bury the hatchet and join hands with the SP and support Akhilesh as the Chief Minister candidate in the 2022 UP Assembly polls. He had also suggested joint celebration on Mulayam's birthday.

Shivpal and Akhilesh had parted company in 2016, at the fall end of the SP regime. Akhilesh had later dismissed his uncle from the Cabinet.

Rajnath: Abrogation of J-K's special status restored political credibility

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Claiming that abrogation of Article 370 giving special status to the former state of Jammu and Kashmir was a big achievement, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that the Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre had restored political credibility by fulfilling the promise the party had made to the people.

"We had promised to repeal Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir and we fulfilled that promise in our second innings. This shows our faith in restoring political credibility. What we promise we deliver," Singh said while addressing BJP workers here on Friday.

He said that since the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, not a single civilian had been killed while a number of terrorists had been gunned down since then by the security forces.

"Our government is trying to restore normalcy in Kashmir and we have succeeded by and large," he said.

The Defence Minister said that Pakistan, which was making a hue and cry over Kashmir, was losing friends globally "because the world knows the credential of Pakistan and how it has promoted terrorism in the region."

"The economy of Pakistan is in tatters yet it is supporting



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh being welcomed at Cantonment BJP workers' felicitation function held at Ravindralaya in Lucknow on Friday

terrorism. Recently I attended ASEAN defence ministers' meet in Bangkok where all the countries were willing to talk to India because they know the credential of our country and its commitment towards wiping out terrorism so that people may live in peace and harmony," Singh said.

He did not spare opposition over their charges of economic slowdown.

"The opposition parties are crying wolf about slowdown of Indian economy. One thing we need to realise is that

there is a global recession and we are facing its impact. We will get over it and by 2024, India will be 5-trillion dollar economy and will become the fifth economic power of the world," the Defence Minister said.

"By 2025, we will become one of the top five economic powers of the world and in next 10-14 years, India will be among the top three," he claimed.

Addressing party workers, Singh said that he was ready to listen to the grievances of

the people. "I am just a call away from you. If you have any problem, call me and I will get back to redress your problem," he said.

Singh is on a three-day visit to his parliamentary constituency Lucknow. On Saturday, he will attend the Pension Adalat for defence personnel at AMC Headquarters.

Rajnath on the occasion also highlighted various works that are going on in Lucknow and promised to do more to end traffic woes in the city.

PF row: Power staff welcome Yogi's move

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation employees welcomed the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's move of ensuring the security of their provident fund deposit.

The Power Employee's Joint Action Committee (PEJAC) said that they were now confident that the Uttar Pradesh government would soon issue a gazette notification giving an undertaking that it would make payment of provident fund to the power employees.

On Thursday, Yogi Adityanath reviewed the situation arising out of the provident fund cash blocked in Deewan Housing Finance Company. The debt-ridden company defaulted in repayment of ₹40,000 crore to PSU banks and also the payment obligations towards mutual fund, pension fund, fixed deposits and other borrowings.

Yogi Adityanath summoned top officials of Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of UP Police and officials of UP Power Corporation Limited and directed them to collect evidence against those guilty of depositing provident fund money as fixed deposit with the Deewan

Housing Finance Company.

The Chief Minister also asked officials to explore all options for the payment of provident fund to power employees. He also reviewed the progress in the EOW investigations into the PF scam and asked officials to ensure that the guilty did not go scot free.

Yogi asked UPPCL brass to ensure that a clear message went out to power employees that the state government was committed to ensuring the safety and payment of their hard-earned provident fund money.

The Chief Minister also reiterated that the government was with the power employees and was making sincere efforts to recover the money from DHFL and return it to the power employees.

Meanwhile, the power employees staged peaceful demonstrations at Shakti Bhawan and at all districts. The agitating employees also met elected representatives in districts and apprised them of their angst due to the PF scam.

The striking employees had earlier given a call for work boycott from November 28, demanding issuance of notification by the government in this regard.

PCS officer dismissed

Lucknow (PNS): The Uttar Pradesh government dismissed PCS officer Ashok Shukla for posting objectionable content against the state government on social media. The officer had also targeted Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in his post.

Shukla was promoted to state civil services from the post of tehsildar and was presently posted at Board of Revenue as officer on special duty. The state government had instituted a departmental inquiry against Shukla under UP State Employees (Conduct and Appeal) Rules, 1999 and he was served a chargesheet in March 2018. Divisional Commissioner of Lucknow was the inquiry officer. Besides social media post, Shukla was also charged with fraudulently transferring government land to a private individual while being posted as SDM of Shahabad in Hardoi.

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No.SSA/Esst/TT&P/EPB/2020/375/2019/10281 Date: 22.11.2019

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam (Samagra Siksha Abhijan) invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed exercise book manufacturers for the supply of Evaluation and Practice Books for class -III&IV (Single Line, Plain and Square Line).

To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/- Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No.SSA/TT&P/EPB/351/2019/10280 Date: 22.11.2019

Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam (under Samagra Siksha Abhijan) invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed exercise book manufacturers for the supply of Evaluation and Practice Books for class-I & II (Four Line and Square Line).

To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/- Mission Director, SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Minor girl raped, set ablaze in Shamli

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 16-year-old girl was raped and later torched by her neighbour to conceal the crime in Shamli district on Thursday night.

The teenager was referred to Safdarjung hospital in Delhi by doctors at the Shamli District Hospital. The police registered a case and claimed to have arrested the accused.

After visiting the scene of crime, IG, Moradabad Range, Ramit Sharma said that National Security Act (NSA) would be invoked against the accused and a case was already registered under POCSO Act against him.

As per reports, the girl was in her house in Nakhasa police station area of Sambhal when her neighbour, Zeeshan, barged in and raped her.

Assistant Superintendent of Police in Sambhal, Alok Jaiswal, said that as the victim raised an alarm, the miscreant doused her with kerosene and set her ablaze in an attempt to kill her and conceal the crime. However, some neighbours heard her cries and rushed to her help. She was rushed to the district hospital and later referred to Delhi hospital with 75 per cent burns.

Meanwhile in Azamgarh, a six-year-old girl was raped and

killed in a village in Mubarakpur area on Friday morning.

The girl went missing on Thursday night and her body was found the next morning.

Locals staged a dharna after which Superintendent of Police Triveni Singh rushed to the spot and pacified them.

In a separate incident, a minor girl was raped by her father in Etah on November 18. The 16-year-old victim was living with her maternal grandparents and had come to visit her father at his house on the fateful day. As per the FIR, the victim told her mother about the incident upon returning home.

The teenager was sent for medical examination and the accused was arrested.

Meanwhile, A sessions court sentenced four persons to life imprisonment in a 2007 murder of a farmer in Muzaffarnagar district.

The court on Thursday pronounced the verdict against Santa Singh, his son Sanju, relatives Mahabar and Shishpal for murdering Mukesh.

According to public prosecutor Omprakash Upadhyay, Mukesh was shot dead while he was asleep at his house in Bhokahedi village under Bhopa police station limits in the district on August 15, 2007. The four men killed Mukesh over an enmity, he added.

UPCC chief courts controversy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

No stranger to controversy, Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Kumar 'Lallu' landed himself in yet another controversy after getting notices served on 11 senior Congress leaders for their alleged anti-party activities.

But instead of replying to the notices, the Congress veterans advised the "youngsters" running the party to first read the Congress constitution before issuing notices. "We all are AICC members and a disciplinary committee of UP Congress Committee (UPCC) has no power as per the party constitution to serve notices on us," said a former UP minister and Congress veteran leader.

Without taking names, the veteran leader went on to take a dig at both Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and her "protégé" Ajay Kumar 'Lallu', saying that the "youngsters" wanting to weed out veterans in the name of giving organisational power to youths, should first look up the constitution of the Congress and then lead the party.

"Lallu has made a mockery of the system as he even does not know that a single member of the three-member disciplinary committee cannot serve notice as the notice has to be signed by at least two members," the veteran said.

The irked leader even expressed surprise that the



UPCC chief Ajay Kumar 'Lallu' (left) addressing reporters at party office in Lucknow

notice had the signature of former MLA Ajay Rai, when he was present in Varanasi on Friday evening.

Even before taking charge as UP Congress chief, Lallu issued appointment letters to Siddharth Priya Srivastava and Anoop Gupta as UPCC administration in-charges, he added.

Party sources claimed only former Youth Congress chief SP Goswami replied to the notice while veterans like Satyadeo Tripathi, Ram Krishna Dwivedi and others challenged it.

On his part, Tripathi claimed, "So far I have not received the notice. I am also not going to reply to it as I am not involved in any kind of anti-party activities."

Replying on the action taken on the notices, Lallu claimed that the notices were served at 7:30 pm on Thursday and a day's time was given for taking further decision.

When reminded that he

had earlier issued notice to MLA Aditi Singh for anti-party activities and she had refused to reply and what action was taken against her, Lallu said that he would update the media after discussing it with present Congress Legislative Party leader Aradhana Mishra 'Mona'.

The 11 veteran Congressmen, mostly former legislators and AICC members, went against the party line and recently held a meeting to challenge Lallu's leadership.

The leaders served notices are former MP and AICC member Santosh Singh, ex-MLC and AICC member Siraj Mehndi, former UP ministers and AICC members Ram Krishna Dwivedi and Satyadeo Tripathi, AICC member Rajendra Singh Solanki, ex-MLA and AICC member Madhur Narain Mishra, former MLA and AICC member Hafiz Mohammad Umar, former MLA Vinod Chaudhury, former MLA Nek

Chandra Pandey, former Youth Congress president SP Goswami and former Gorakhpur unit chief Ssnjeev Singh.

These leaders have sought time from Congress chief Sonia Gandhi to appraise her about how senior leaders were being humiliated in the party by Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on the pretext of transferring power to young leaders.

Siraj Mehndi, a former member of the UP Legislative Council, claimed he had not yet got the notice and could not speak on it merely on the basis of newspaper reports.

"Our move was aimed at strengthening the party and removing any shortcomings in the organisation. How can we be blamed for indiscipline?" another leader said.

He said the seniors were concerned over their role in the organisation after the new UPCC was announced in October, giving preference to youth over experience.

The veterans defended their participation in the meetings, including one on November 14. They asked if paying tributes to former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and discussing the withdrawal of Special Protection Group security to the Gandhi family amounted to indiscipline.

The disgruntled leaders had organised their separate programme that day instead of attending the one held at the UPCC headquarters.

the pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

सूचना
नै अपने पुत्र दीनेद सोनकर चर्क राजू के गलत आचरण के चलते अपनी समस्त सत्त अवलंब संपत्ति से बेदखल करती है। मुदुला सोनकर फनी रघु बक्कल ताल सोनकर, लखनऊ।

NOTICE
I inform that the correct name of my daughter is Seema Singh not Sima Devi and correct date of birth is 15.07.1981 not 26.02.1980. The above information is true and correct. Naik Ayodhya Singh.

NOTICE
Original Possession and Allotment Letter of my House has been lost. Use of this is illegal. Sunil Kumar Srivastava S/o Late Sushel Kumar Srivastava, MIG-61, LDA Colony, Water Works Road, Aishbagh, Lucknow.

Three killed, 45 injured in separate road accidents

Three persons were killed and 45 injured in separate road accidents during the past 24 hours.

Three men were killed when their motorcycles collided near Budhana in Muzaffarnagar district on Friday.

The men, two in their early 20s and one 40-year-old, were not wearing helmets, Budhana station house officer Kushalpal Singh said.

The accident took place on the Budhana-Baraut Road. The bodies of Khalil (22), Lokesh (23) and Nilu (40) were sent to hospital for post-mortem.

At least 32 people were injured when a tractor-trolley in which they were travelling

overturned in Banda district.

The victims were returning home after performing *mundan* ceremony of a six-month-old boy at a Kali temple in Bhedaghat area on Thursday evening.

The tractor-trolley overturned into a roadside ditch on the Banda-Tanda road near Chapar village at Tindwari block. Thirty-two people, including women and children, were injured, police said.

The tractor driver fled the scene and a search was on to nab him.

In another road accident reported from Banda at least 13 people were injured when a speeding car lost control after being hit by a truck from behind and rammed into a

tempo coming from the opposite, police said on Friday.

All the injured were in the tempo.

The accident took place on the Banda-Fatehpur road under the Tindwari police station area on Thursday evening. A speeding car lost balance after being hit by a truck from behind and rammed into a tempo coming from the opposite direction, said SHO Neeraj Kumar Singh.

While three of the injured were admitted to the district hospital, others were undergoing treatment in nearby hospitals.

The drivers of truck and car fled the scene leaving their vehicles behind. Efforts are on to trace them, the SHO added.

65th national convention of ABVP begins in Agra

Agra (PTI): The 65th national convention of RSS-affiliated student's union Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad began on Friday in Agra city. Around 2,000 ABVP members from across the country are attending the four-day-long convention, which is being held at Agra College.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma said the ABVP was "different" from other student organisations as it gave importance to national unity.

"ABVP members are willing to do anything for national unity. This patriotic fervour reflects in any of the programmes of the ABVP," he said, adding that the ABVP was also playing the role of preparing future leaders for the country. He attended the programme for a brief time though.

ABVP national president S Subbaiah, while addressing the convention, said decisions on Ram Jannabhoomi and Article 370 "showed national revivalism was taking place."

The theme for the convention is 'Braj' to showcase the region's Braj culture. Members from BJP's Agra unit, Agra Mayor Naveen Jain and other party members attended the event on Friday.

इलाहाबाद बैंक ALLAHABAD BANK
www.allahabadbank.in
Branch : Bangla Bazar, Lucknow

NOTICE OF SALE
Sale of Vehicle hypothecated to bank under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 54 of 2002) Auction No. ALB/Bangla Bazar/KO02
Whereas, the Authorized Officer of Allahabad Bank had taken possession of the following properties pursuant to the notice issued under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS, AS IS WHAT IS, AS IS WHATEVER THERE IS" basis for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said properties. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided by the Service Provider - <https://www.allahabadbank.auctiontger.net>.

Sl. No. / Proprietor/Partners/Director(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Details of movable property	Dt. of Demand Notice	a) Reserve Price
1. Borrower-Mr. Amit Shukla S/o Mr. Laxmi Shankar Shukla, R/o-1/203, Puchi Khand, Sharda Nagar, Lucknow.	Bolero SLE 2WD 75TR, Car/ Vehicle No. UP32G4603, Engine No. GRF4E76733, Chassis No. MA1PL2GRKF5E54970	04.07.2018 31.08.2019	a) Rs. 3,10,000/- b) Rs. 31,000/-
		Rs. 7,08,906/- Int. w/ef & other charges	c) A/c No. 50004902322 IFSC: ALLA0212325 d) 10,000.00

Last Date & time for Submission of Process compliance Form with EMD : 26.12.2019 up to 5.00 P.M.
Date and Time of e-Auction : On 28.12.2019 at 12.00 Noon to 2.00 P.M.

For further details and Terms & Conditions, contact: Authorised Officer, Mob. No. 9532702907
For downloading further details and Terms & Conditions, please visit: I. <https://www.allahabadbank.in> II. <https://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app> III. <https://www.allahabadbank.auctiontger.net>

THE BORROWER(S)/GUARANTOR(S) ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED ABOUT THE SALE NOTICE UNDER THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002 (Head Office, 2, Netaji Subhas Road, Kolkata-700011)

Place - Lucknow, Date : 21.11.2019 Authorised Officer, Allahabad Bank

Youth killed as bike rams road divider; brother, cousin injured

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A youth was killed in a road mishap near Ambedkar Park under Alambagh police station in the intervening night of Thursday and Friday. His brother and cousin also sustained injuries and were admitted to KGMU Trauma Centre. The deceased was identified as Rahul Rawat (29) while those injured as Gopal Rawat (27) and Aman Rawat (19).

Police said the deceased was the elder brother of Aman

while Gopal is their cousin. They were returning on a motorcycle after attending a function organised by their common friends around 3 am. Rahul was riding the two-wheeler. The police said the deceased lost control of the vehicle which rammied into the road divider.

The trio were rushed to a private nursing home with the help of security guards of a government establishment there. Rahul succumbed to injuries at the nursing home while Gopal

and Aman were referred to the KGMU Trauma Centre.

Meanwhile, police arrested Sant Ram, a resident of Malihabad, for conspiring to kill one Govind at Bhimakheda village on November 28, 2018. The police had been searching him since then but failing to trace his whereabouts. The police sought the help of informers. The police were tipped off in the afternoon that the accused was spotted near Punjab National Bank branch. A police team led by police sta-

tion incharge Waheed Ahmed nabbed him. During interrogation, he reportedly confessed to his crime.

Meanwhile, the police arrested two persons under Arms Act. They were identified as Arvind Kumar and Anmol Rawat. Three country-made pistols, five live cartridges and three empty shells were recovered from their possession. They were picked up for interrogation near Kakori crossing and were arrested for being in possession of illegal arms.



Samajwadi Party workers donating blood at Civil Hospital on Friday to mark the birthday of party's patriarch and former UP Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav

Kamlesh's widow gets death threats

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The widow of Hindutva outfit president Kamlesh Tiwari was issued death threats through a letter delivered to her house in Khurshed Bagh under Naka police station. The sender mentioned his name as Ganesh Nago Rao, a resident of Latur district in Maharashtra.

An FIR was registered at the Naka police station on Friday following a complaint lodged on November 18 last by Kiran Tiwari. The nine-page letter kept in an envelope was delivered by post at her house on November 14 evening. The letter was written in Urdu and Hindi. Investigating officer Akhilesh Kumar said the sender did not mention as to why he wanted to kill her. He said after Tiwari was killed at his house last month, his wife Kiran took control of the organisation.

The police informed their counterparts in Latur district and sought their cooperation in the investigation. The investigating officer claimed that the probe had been started and the conspiracy to eliminate her will be foiled and culprits will be nabbed soon.

Veggie wholesaler robbed of ₹3.5L at pistol-point

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A bag containing Rs 3.5 lakh was snatched from a wholesaler at the gun-point by two unidentified miscreants near Navin Galla Mandi on Sitapur road. The victim was identified as Ram Kumar Sonkar alias Bablu, who is a resident of Rama Apartment in Nirala Nagar.

Police said the wholesaler was returning home from the market around 6 pm when two miscreants with their faces covered asked him the way to a doctor's clinic. All of a sudden, they tried to snatch his bag containing cash. As Ram Kumar offered resistance, the pillion-rider whipped out a pistol and trained it on the vic-



tim. They pushed him off the motorcycle and sped off with the cash bag. The police confirmed the incident of loot but said there was no complaint lodged by Ram Kumar or any of his kin yet. Police spokesman SB Shukla said investigation was in progress.

FORM No. - 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, LUCKNOW
600/1, University Road, Near Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow - 226007
(Jurisdiction-Part of U.P. and Uttaranchal)
SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION

O.A. No. 449/2019 Date: 16.11.2019
(Summons to defendant Under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debt Due to Bank and Financial Institution Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)

BANK OF INDIA ...APPLICANT
Gomti Nagar, Lucknow

VERSUS

SMT MADHURI DEVI & ANOTHER ...DEFENDANTS

To,

1. Smt. Madhuri Devi wife of Sri Ram Bihari Prasad permanent resident: House No. 71 Ka, Village Ward No. 10 Purani Chowk, Gopalganj, Bihar.
Also at: C/o Rita Mishra W/o B N Mishra E-1160, Ratnakar Khand, LDA Colony, Lucknow-226014.

2. Sri Ram Bihari Prasad son of Narayan Prasad, permanent resident: House No. 71 Ka, Village Ward No. 10 Purani Chowk, Gopalganj, Bihar.
Also at: C/o Rita Mishra W/o B N Mishra E-1160, Ratnakar Khand, LDA Colony, Lucknow-226014.

DEFENDANTS

In the above noted application you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 03.12.2019 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

REGISTRAR
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow

Officials asked to carry out study on impact of pollution on zoo inmates

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash has directed officials concerned to carry out a study on the impact of pollution on zoo inmates and the possibility of a bigger place for the district for the purpose. District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash said he has asked for a study to be carried out regarding the effects of pollution on zoo inmates. "The DFO Awadh, along with zoo authorities, can also explore whether there is a possibility of another place in the district where these animals are shifted so that they get better ecology and visitors are provided better amenities. The issue was raised at a District Environment Committee meeting held at Collectorate recently," the DM said.

has become. Kanaujia said it is the green heritage of the city and plantations are also heritage apart from the site being a heritage in archaeological terms.

"It also has the largest biodiversity in terms of the varieties of butterflies and birds," she added. She further pointed out that it is accessible to the school students and people of the city as it is located in the heart of the city. "This is not simply a zoo but a zoological garden and is used frequently by people for morning walk," she said.

The zoo has been attracting a large number of visitors from both old and new parts of the city. Also known as Nawab Wajid Ali Shah Prani Udyan, it was established in 1921 to mark the visit of the then Prince of Wales to Lucknow. It was earlier known as Prince of Wales Zoological Gardens and is the oldest zoo in northern India. It is spread in an area of over 70 acres. Among its attractions are hundreds of animals, reptiles and birds. A toy train for children is also a major attraction while the campus also houses State Museum and Folk Arts Museum.

Alka Pandey to be LU's second woman proctor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Alka Pandey from Hindi department of Lucknow University was on Friday nominated as the proctor for a period of three years. She will take charge on Saturday. Vice-Chancellor SK Shukla said she has been nominated as the proctor because she is experienced and has worked as assistant proctor as well as additional proctor of LU in the past.

"She is well versed with the problems of the university. Academically too, she is highly qualified and is currently a professor at the Hindi department. An



alumna of Lucknow University, she joined as a faculty member in 1999," Shukla said. He said that as an assistant and addition-

al proctor, she has been interacting with the students. Alka Pandey has done PhD and DLitt from Hindi department of Lucknow University and was promoted as a professor in 2014. She has been the additional director of 'Sanskritika', the cultural organisation of the university.

Alka Pandey will be the second woman proctor of Lucknow University. The first woman appointed at this post was Nishi Pandey from English department. The post was last held by Vinod Singh when SP Singh was the Vice-Chancellor. Singh completed his term on November 11 last.

डॉ० राम मनोहर लोहिया आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान, लखनऊ के नवनिर्मित शैक्षणिक भवन का लोकार्पण

योगी आदित्यनाथ
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश
के कर-कमलों द्वारा

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

सुरेश कुमार खन्ना
मंत्री, चिकित्सा शिक्षा, वित्त एवं संसदीय कार्य, उत्तर प्रदेश

संदीप सिंह
राज्यमंत्री, चिकित्सा शिक्षा विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

शनिवार, दिनांक 23 नवम्बर, 2019, समय: पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे
स्थान: डॉ० राम मनोहर लोहिया आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान, विभूति खण्ड, गोमतीनगर, लखनऊ

14 मंजिला इमारत
40 शैक्षणिक विभाग
05 लेक्चर थियेटर (यात्रा कक्ष)
मल्टीपरपज हॉल

03 मंजिला बेसमेंट पार्किंग
उच्चस्तरीय चिकित्सा पुस्तकालय
सैंट्रल रिसर्च लैब
स्किल लैब

चार पहिया वाहन चलाते समय सीट बेल्ट अवश्य लगाये
चिकित्सा शिक्षा विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

भारत के प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा वर्ष 1952 में उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस को पुलिस कलर (झण्डा) प्रदान किया गया।

झण्डा दिवस के अवसर पर हम पुलिस कर्मियों को उनकी सेवा, शौर्य और शहादत के लिए नमन करते हैं।
—उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस

प्रिय साथियों,
शक्ति एवं निष्ठा के प्रतीक, लाल एवं नीले रंग के ध्वज ने उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस को एक गौरवमयी पहचान दी है। ब्रिटिश उपनिवेश के 'पुलिस-बल' से 'पुलिस-विभाग' तक की यात्रा उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस के लिये एक गौरव गाथा है, जिसका प्रत्येक पृष्ठ भारत के आधुनिक इतिहास का प्रामाणिक साक्ष्य है। वर्ष 1860 में जब कोर्ट पुलिस कमीशन में 'सिविल कान्स्टेबुलरी' के गठन की योजना बनी, तब से सर सीताराम पुलिस पुनर्गठन कमेटी एवं उसके बाद वर्ष 1960 में उ.प्र. पुलिस कमीशन तक आते-आते 'कानून की सीमा' में पुलिस व्यवस्था को संचालित करने की रीति-नीति बनायी गयी। पुलिस एक्ट-1861 के अनुसार पुलिस का पुनर्गठन अपराध के नियंत्रण एवं अन्वेषण के लिये किया गया। स्वतंत्रता के पश्चात् पुलिस तंत्र को जनता के प्रति जवाबदेह बनाने हेतु उ.प्र. पुलिस कमीशन द्वारा पुलिस को कानून की सीमा में रहकर कार्य करने की आवश्यकता पर बल दिया गया।

23 नवम्बर, 1952 को पुलिस लाइन्स लखनऊ के परेड ग्राउण्ड में वार्षिक पुलिस परेड के अवसर पर राष्ट्र के प्रथम प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा पुलिस एवं पीएसी ध्वज प्रदान किये गये। उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस की ओर से पुलिस उप अधीक्षक श्री एस.एन. तनखा द्वारा ध्वज प्राप्त किया गया। ध्वज का आकार 4 फिट लम्बा एवं 3 फिट चौड़ा है। यह दो रंगों का है जिसमें ऊपर लाल रंग एवं नीचे की ओर नीला रंग है। मध्य में उ.प्र. पुलिस का प्रतीक चिन्ह है।

उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस कमीशन (1960-61) की रिपोर्ट में पुलिस मुख्यालय को इलाहाबाद से लखनऊ स्थानान्तरित करने की संस्तुति की गयी थी। प्रदेश पुलिस को अधिक परिणामोन्मुखी एवं कार्यकुशल बनाने के उद्देश्य से 02 सितम्बर, 2019 को माननीय मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ जी द्वारा नवीन पुलिस मुख्यालय का लोकार्पण लखनऊ में किया गया। मुख्यालय पुलिस महानिदेशक सहित उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस की कुल 13 शाखाएँ इस भवन में स्थापित हैं। जनकल्याण एवं जन समस्याओं के निराकरण के लिये एक भवन में ही सभी प्रकल्प व्यवस्थित किये गये हैं। समाज के अंतिम व्यक्ति को भयमुक्त जीवन जीने की परिस्थितियाँ तैयार करने के लिये हम संकल्पित हैं।

उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस दृढ़ प्रतिज्ञा है कि हम अपने प्रदेश के लोगों की सुरक्षा करते हुए अपने ध्वज के सम्मान को बनाये रखेंगे। हम अपने ध्वज की गरिमा को आगे ले जाने के लिये कर्तव्य के पथ से किसी भी स्थिति में विचलित नहीं होंगे। एक प्रदेश, एक बल, एक ध्येय एवं एक ही कर्तव्य सिर्फ लोक सेवा यही हमारा उद्देश्य है।
जय हिन्द !

ओ.पी. सिंह
पुलिस महानिदेशक, उत्तर प्रदेश

चार पहिया वाहन चलाते समय सीट बेल्ट अवश्य लगायें

IIA says not in favour of turnover-based definition of MSMEs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Indian Industries Association (IIA) is not in favour of turnover-based definition of MSMEs which the Central government is proposing to make. General secretary (IIA) Manmohan Agarwal said on Friday that MSMEs are the backbone of Indian economy.

"MSME members have learnt that the Union Ministry of MSME is proposing to change its definition in the ongoing Parliament session from 'Investment in plant and machinery, equipment bases' to 'Turnover bases', he said.

He pointed out that 6.34 crore MSMEs contribute 30 per cent to the GDP of India and gives direct employment to 11.10 crore people.

IIA, the biggest MSME association in north India, has more than 8000 direct members. On this proposed change of definition of MSME, IIA in consultation with its members observed that the proposed definition is not in favour of a majority of MSMEs. He said that based on a sample survey conducted by IIA, more than 98 per cent MSMEs are having turnover from few lakh to maximum Rs 75 crore.

"As such, these 98 per cent MSMEs will not be benefited at all, rather they will be deprived of the benefits announced by the government for this sector. Larger units having a turnover of more than Rs 75 crore and up to Rs 250 crore and those which are not a part of MSME sector will also become entitled for the benefits available for MSMEs, hence eating the cake of the existing ones," he pointed out.

Agarwal said that as on date, MSEs are provided 25 per

IIA IN CONSULTATION WITH ITS MEMBERS OBSERVED THAT THE PROPOSED DEFINITION IS NOT IN FAVOUR OF A MAJORITY OF MSMEs

cent reservation in public procurements at the Central government level and in most of the state government. "This benefit will be eaten away by enterprises with higher turnover entering into the band with new proposed definition," he added.

"The 'Make in India' mission of the government will suffer a setback since existing MSMEs will be pushed towards sickness and employment opportunities in the MSME sector will also shrink. The turnover of an enterprise is a frequently fluctuating phenomenon compared to investment in plant & machinery and equipment. Hence, the status of enterprise category may also change frequently. This situation will create more complications for MSMEs," he explained. Agarwal pointed out that with the change of definition based on turnover, the entrepreneurs will not be motivated to increase investment in plant and machinery as well as equipment. However, IIA said if the government is adamant, the maximum turnover for MSMEs should not be more than Rs 5 crore, 25 crore and Rs 75 crore respectively in manufacturing sector, and Rs 2 crore, 10 crore and Rs 50 crore in service sector.

Wildlife Institute to find out city's biodiversity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The Wildlife Institute of Lucknow University is working on finding out the biodiversity of city. Coordinator of Wildlife Institute of Studies Amita Kanaujia said it will give the details of biodiversity which the city has currently and the percentage growth which it has witnessed. The study, she said, was an initiative of the institute itself and on the suggestions of senior forest officials. The study includes the profile of the city and 23 indicators. The indicators include native biodiversity of the city like proportion of natural area, number of vascular plant species, bird species, butterflies, invasive plant species and other species, proportion of protected natural area.

"It will also include a study of the ecosystem services provided

by biodiversity, including carbon storage of vegetation, area of parks with natural area, regulation of quantity of water, educational visit to natural area. Apart from this, it will also include governance and management of biodiversity, which includes number of biodiversity projects, biodiversity strategy and action plan, number of awareness programmes held in the city, budget allocated to biodiversity, number of private agencies, NGOs and academic institutions involved in biodiversity-related work," she added.

The City Biodiversity Index is also referred to as the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity or the Singapore Index (SI), which is a self-assessment tool for cities to evaluate and monitor the progress of their biodiversity conservation efforts against

their own individual baselines. The scoring of the Singapore Index is quantitative in nature where each indicator is assigned a scoring range between zero and four points, with a total possible maximum score of 92 points. The year in which a city first embarks on this scoring will be taken as the baseline year, and this will be measured against future applications of the index to chart its progress in conserving biodiversity.

National Parks Board of Singapore (NParks), along with experts from various countries, assisted the Secretariat of the CBD (Convention of BioDiversity) to develop the index. The result is the formulation of the 'Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity' or 'Singapore Index (SI)' and it is named so to recognise Singapore's contribution and leadership.

SCHOOLSCAN

STATE TOPPER

Aman Soni, a class VIII student of City Montessori School, Mahanagar, has won the title of 'State Topper of Brainobrain Wonderkids' competition. In mental maths, abacus, quiz, logical activity and other contests, students of various schools took part. Aman showcased his knowledge and mental ability and walked away with the title. He was awarded a cash



prize of Rs 1,000, a gold medal and a certificate.

AWARENESS CAMP

The department of Food Safety and Drug Administration organised an awareness camp on 'Food adulteration and safety' at St Joseph Winter College in Malihabad on Friday. The officials educated the students about the types of food adulteration, its causes and safety measures to be taken.



Amid BHU controversy, teachers recall AMU's Sanskrit connect

Aligarh: Amid a row at Banaras Hindu University over the appointment of a Muslim professor at its Sanskrit department, teachers at Aligarh Muslim University recalled their institute's contribution to the subject. An AMU scholar was the first Muslim to earn a PhD in Sanskrit. Two of the nine faculty members at the Sanskrit department now are Muslims, they reminded.

At BHU, a group of students has been protesting against the appointment of Feroze Khan, saying a Muslim cannot teach Sanskrit. The BHU has backed the professor. AMU spokesperson Rahat Abrar told PTI that when Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College turned into a university in 1920, its Sanskrit department was among the most prestigious at AMU.

The second vice-chancellor of AMU, Sahibzada Aftab Ahmad Khan, in his inaugural address at the varsity in 1924 had highlighted the importance of Sanskrit. "Sanskrit literature is a record of Hindu civilisation and culture and it is our aim to produce Muslim scholars who would enrich our culture by a contribution from this source," he is quoted as

saying. "It is proposed to award special scholarships to Muslim students for the study of this subject," he said.

Pandit Ram Swarup Shastri, a noted Sanskrit scholar, was among the first members of the faculty to be appointed at the newly established university, Abrar said. It was this modern outlook which helped AMU to become one of the top universities in the country immediately after it was established, he added.

Abrar said there have been several Muslim professors at AMU's Sanskrit department in recent years, including Salma Mahfooz, Khalid Bin Yusuf and Mohammad Sharif. Mahfooz became the first Muslim woman in the world in 1970 to earn a PhD in Sanskrit, he said. At present, at present the department has nine faculty members of which two are Muslims.

Mass Communication department head Shafey Kidwai recalled the achievement of another Muslim scholar of Sanskrit. "A noted Hindi and Sanskrit scholar, Habibur Rehman Shastri, who was a member of the faculty at AMU in the 1950s, has the distinction of being the first

scholar to write a book on Indian aesthetics and the subject of 'Principles of Ras', titled 'Ras ke Nazariye,' he said. The book was recently republished by the Sahitya Akademi, he said.

Kidwai said that the hallmark of Indian civilisation has been its ability to produce great scholars who have traditionally transcended the barriers of caste, creed and religion. Muslim scholars won acclaim for their mastery of Sanskrit in the Mughal era, he said, naming Abdur Raheem Khankhana, Abul Faiz Faizi and Dara Shikoh among those who translated the great epics of Sanskrit literature like Bhagavad Gita and the Vedas.

It was this broad-minded and progressive approach that made India great, Kidwai added. Former AMU student union president Faizul Hasan said the controversy over the professor's appointment at BHU reflected poorly on claims of the emergence of a "new India". He said the founding fathers of BHU and AMU, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, never promoted such sectarian policies when these institutions were established.

P-WAY WORKS

E-Tender Notice No.: 83/W-2/APDJ, Dated: 20-11-2019. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works. Tender No. 30-AP-II-2019. Name of Work: Gosaigaon Hat - New Bongaigaon Complete Track Renewal (P) - 1.833 KM. Tender Value: ₹91,11,649.26; Earnest Money: ₹1,82,300/-; Cost of Tender: ₹ 5,000/-; E-tender will be Closed at 13:00 hrs. on 16-12-2019 and Opened at 15:00 hrs. on 16-12-2019. For details visit: www.ireps.gov.in

Divisional Railway Manager (Works), Alipurduar Jn. NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY Serving Customers With A Smile

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि., बांदा। निविदा खुलने की तिथि विस्तारण सूचना इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित ई-निविदा संख्या 74, 75, 76, 77 & 78/SE/EDCB/2019-20 को ई-टेंडर आमंत्रित करते हुए खुलने की तिथि अपरिहार्य कारणोंवाश अग्रिम दिनांक 03.12.2019 तक विस्तारित की जाती है। विस्तृत जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट पोर्टल https://etender.up.nic.in एवं https://dvvnl.org पर उपलब्ध रहेगी। (शैलेन्द्र कुमार) अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, बांदा। पत्रांक: 1559/विद्युत/2019-20/74-78, दिनांक - 22.11.2019 "सच्चाई में बिजली बचाये"

CITYBRIEFS



WORKSHOP

Vigyan Prasar and National Council of Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) provided an opportunity to students to participate in a workshop on 'Astronomical Telescope Making'. The five-day workshop concluded on Friday. As many as 40 students of KVS Lucknow and Varanasi region learnt to make telescope under the mentorship of Vipin Singh, a telescope expert from Vigyan Prasar. "The tasks included grinding, polishing, assembling, cutting of PVC pipes and painting the telescope by the students themselves," a member of the organising team said.

CUSTOMER MEETS

State Bank of India (SBI) organised 'Customer Meets' for its customers across the country at over 500 venues. In order to bring qualitative improvement in customer experience through continued engagement, SBI has been organising customer contact programmes at regular intervals. In Lucknow circle, the

meets were organised at 49 places. Video messages of SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar and MD (R&DB) PK Gupta were played during the meets. The chairman said these meets are sources of valuable feedback on many issues and based on suggestions of the customers, path-breaking initiatives are being taken to remove pain points of the customers.

LAST SHOW

Regional Science City officials said due to preventive maintenance work of Scimax equipment, its last show will be screened at 2:15 pm on November 25 (Monday).

EXHIBITION

Taking a cue from the bazaars in Mughal times, this Meena Bazaar was curated for the FLO delegates who had assembled in Lucknow from all over the country to take part in the annual Inter-State Meet. The exhibition was inaugurated by folk singer Malini Awasthi. Small stalls with their quaint offerings tempted the visitors. There was a virtual kalaedioscope of sarees, suits,

lehengas, sharasas, gararas, dupattas and stoles in all kinds of handwork. There were also delicate slippers, juttis, potlis, and other enthralling home products made by artisans from U.P. FLO president Harjinder Kaur Talwar said it is a common platform for experience sharing, showcasing, mentoring and networking of the dynamic pan-India members. "Our objective is to bring together women entrepreneurs and professionals from Delhi and 16 chapters across India and provide a perfect milieu for exchange of ideas and meeting of the minds," she added.

SPECIAL CAMPAIGN

Under the directions of District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash, officials from district administration, LMC and police carried out a special campaign and caught stray bovines. Officials said stray animals were caught from Indiranagar, Munshipulia, Bhootnath, Polytechnic, Vibhuti Khand, Mall Avenue, Kaiserbagh and Kalidas Marg.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

CONG, NCP OK...

Earlier, Uddhav, however, said that his party, and the NCP-Congress alliance had agreed on many things. "We were meeting for the first time like this. We have reached on a consensus on many things. We do not want to leave anything undecided. The discussions are still going on. We will not go before the people till we decide on everything".

However, Shiv Sena's Legislature Party leader Eknath Shinde, who is also a chief ministerial aspirant, said that there was no discussion on the chief minister's choice. He said that the discussions were going on many issues, including the Speaker's post.

Apart from Uddhav, Pawar and Chavan, prominent among the leaders who were present at the tripartite meeting were Eknath Shinde, Aditya Thackeray, Subhash Desai, Sanjay Raut (all from the Shiv Sena), Ahmed Patel, Mallikarjun Kharge, K C Venugopal, Avinash Pande, Balasaheb Thorat, Prithviraj Chavan (Congress), Praful Patel, Jayant Patil and Ajit Pawar (all from the NCP).

At the meeting, the leaders of the three parties formalised the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) and discussed the sharing of ministries in details. As per the agreement reached at the meeting, the Shiv Sena will get 16 ministerial berths, NCP 14 and Congress 12.

As per the agreement reached among the three parties, the Shiv Sena will get the chairmanships of 27 state-run boards, while the NCP and Congress will get the chairmanships of 25 state-run boards each.

Given that the Sena would get the chief minister's post for full five years, there will in all likelihood be two deputy chief ministers. The details on what transpired about the choice of deputy chief ministers was not immediately known.

Sources said that though the leaders from the three parties discussed the sharing of portfolios among them, they had not arrived at consensus on sharing of important portfolios like Home, Urban Development, Revenue, Finance, Co-operation and PWD. At Saturday's meeting, the leaders of three parties will decide on sharing of the important ministries among them.

According to the sources, the Assembly Speaker's post has become a major bone of contention between the Congress and NCP. Earlier, it

was speculated that the Congress would get the post and that former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan was the number one choice for the post. However, at Friday's meeting, the NCP is understood to have staked claim for the Speaker's post.

Earlier, the Shiv Sena Legislature Party meeting held at the Thackerays' residence 'Matoshri' earlier in the morning, newly elected Sena MLAs rooted for the Sena President Uddhav Thackeray becoming the Chief Minister in the three-party front Government.

After a majority of the MLAs spoke in favour of Uddhav heading the new government in the state, the Sena president himself signalled them to stop and said: "I have promised late Balasaheb that I will one day install a Shiv Sainik as the chief minister of Maharashtra. I will fulfil my promise. Be assured that the next chief minister will be from the Shiv Sena".

During the course of his address, Uddhav blamed the BJP for the current political situation in the state. "Had the BJP not conducted itself in a manner as it did, we would not have witnessed the kind of the situation we are witnessing today. The BJP is responsible for the current political situation in the state. For the last few days, we have been holding talks with the NCP and Congress. We are in the final stages of government formation. Today, we expect to a decision in the matter," Uddhav told his party MLAs.

After the 75 minute meeting, all the Sena MLAs were driven to Hotel Lalit where they will all be lodged till the three parties complete government formation formalities. On its part, the Congress also held its Legislature Party meeting earlier in the afternoon. However, no CLP leader was elected at the meeting. At the meeting, the Congress obtained the signatures of its newly elected MLAs which the party would submit to the Governor along with its letter of support to the Shiv Sena-led government in the state.

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of a paratrooper flying on to the ground to deliver the pink ball.

Hasina and Banerjee, along with the likes of Tendulkar, spoke to both the teams' players. Also present were some former Bangladesh players, who played in their country's first Test.

The players present from the neighbouring country included their first Test captain Naimur Rahman, Mohammed Mahmudul Hasan, Maharab Hossain, Mohammed Hasibul Hussain, Shahriar Hossain Biddut, Kazi Habibur Bashir and Mohammed Akram Khan.

Former Indian cricketers in attendance included Sadagopan Ramesh, Saba Karim, Sunil Joshi, Ajit Agarkar, Venkatesh Prasad, Kapil Dev, Dilip Vengsarkar, Mohammed Azharuddin, K Srikanth, Farokh Engineer and Chandu Borde.

Sports stars from other parts who showed up at BCCI's invitation included Bindra, Pulella Gopichand, P V Sindhu, Sania Mirza and M C Mary Kom.

Kolkata and sweets go hand in hand and it was little surprise that a one such shop made Sodesh in pink colour, something that was shared by Ganguly on his official Twitter handle.

"Sweets go pink in Kolkata," Ganguly had tweeted.

City's important landmarks -- the Shahid Minar, the tallest building '42' and some Kolkata Municipality Corporation Parks -- were illuminated with pink lights.

The Eden Test will have the usual lunch break after the first session at 3pm while the last break would be for tea spanning 20 minutes.

As per ICC norms, playing conditions can be altered by mutual consent of both the countries.

BANNED NOTES...

The CBI registered the case on November 19 following a request from the Manipur Government routed through the Centre. Besides Singh, the CBI has also named three former MDS chairmen -- D S Poonia, PC Lawmuknga, O Nabakishore Singh -- all retired IAS officers. Y Ningthem Singh, the former project director of the society and S Ranjit Singh, its administrative officer, have also been named accused in the FIR.

The CBI also found property and bank documents from residence of Poonia, Lawmuknga and Nabakishore and the same are being scrutinised.

Army issues WhatsApp advisory

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With Pakistan resorting to social media to trap Indian services personnel to gather sensitive intelligence, the Army has issued an advisory to all its personnel to change their WhatsApp settings to make sure they are not automatically added to any group. This caution comes weeks after the Army warned its officers and men to be aware of fake spiritual gurus trying to entice them through social media.

The latest advisory comes after an Indian Army officer was reportedly added to a group by a Pakistan based mobile number. As per the advisory, the alert officer showed the presence of mind, took a screenshot of the group and exited it. It noted that there had been attempts to target Army personnel on messaging

apps such as WhatsApp in the past. Thereafter, it listed the steps to change the WhatsApp settings to avoid such incidents in the future, sources said here on Friday.

Some days back the Army had warned officers holding sensitive posts in operational areas, all headquarters, divisions and brigades to stop using WhatsApp for official communication as it was vulnerable platform.

The advisory also noted that social media website Facebook could be used for collecting intelligence and personnel were advised to refrain from using their Facebook accounts, sources said here on Friday.

Amongst other precautions to be taken, officers and men were advised not to upload their pictures in uniform or discuss about their posting, officials said adding even the families of those post-

The advisory also noted that social media website Facebook could be used for collecting intelligence

ed in sensitive areas were also cautioned to refrain from talking about the whereabouts of their family members serving in the armed forces.

Moreover, the armed forces have been asked not to link their Gmail accounts to multiple applications as that could compromise information on the email account.

Recently, the Army warned its jawans and officers to be alert as fake spiritual gurus and

babas are reaching out to personnel in an attempt to seek military information. The Army has also issued an advisory to its personnel cautioning them about fake social media sites as nearly 150 such sites used by Pakistan Intelligence Officers has come to light.

Issuing this warning, the Army also alerted its personnel from refraining unknown social media sites that are being used by adversaries for honey trap to extract sensitive information, sources said.

Elaborating upon the threat posed by fake spiritual gurus and babas, they said these persons through the social media try to trap gullible and vulnerable soldiers undergoing some issues thereby depressed and their families.

After gaining their confidence over a time, these so-called gurus then try to seek information about movement of

troops and other sensitive military information.

Explaining the modus operandi about the Pakistani intelligence officers using the fake sites, officials said families of the soldiers are also targeted and sometimes they may inadvertently give information about the posting of their relatives.

The threat is more prominent in civil areas with the army coming in contact with the public and the men in uniform may give out sensitive information.

Some of the fake identities pose as nurses or claim to be from the Army Headquarters seeking details about the whereabouts of the personnel from their families.

The fake profiles are generally 2-3 years old. So, they do not raise suspicion and appear to be authentic. It is then that they started targeting, officials added.

Shah holds meeting with PSMC over onion price hike

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With onion prices showing no signs of decline, the Modi Government on Friday brainstormed over the issue to get root cause to the problem which giving sleepless night to the people.

The Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday chaired a meeting of Price Stabilization Management Committee (PSMC) involving all stakeholders to discuss the strategies to cool down onion prices. Union Ministers Ram Vilas Paswan, Piyush Goyal and Narendra Singh Tomar and senior officials of ministries and intelligence agencies were also present.

Currently, retail onion prices across the country have been hovering around ₹80 to ₹90 per kg, even crossing the

₹100-mark in some places. The wholesale onion price has increased to ₹79.50 per kg at Lasalgaon and ₹82 per kg at Pimpalgaon in Maharashtra on Friday. Daily onion arrivals have dipped to barely 10-15 percent of arrivals a year ago. Traders say the situation is expected to remain till December end due to shortage of onion.

Onion prices have come under pressure due to 26 per cent fall in the production to 52.06 lakh tonnes during the kharif output late-kharif seasons of 2019-20. The Government is also facilitating private imports and also relaxed phytosanitary and fumigation norms till December. PSMC reviews prices of essential commodities whenever they shoot up and figures out the reason behind

the surge and then decides on measures to be taken to rein them in. Since August, these officials have become a regular fixture at the meetings of the government's PSMC Officials of intelligence, enforcement and income tax department work in tandem with the agriculture, commerce and consumer affairs ministries to ensure that onion prices are kept under check.

The central Government has been holding regular meetings on ways to check the rise in the price of onions. The Union Cabinet had on Wednesday approved import of 1.2 lakh metric tonnes onion in view of high prices of the essential commodity in the market. The Government has been trying to tackle the issue since August when prices first touched ₹40 per kg.

FROM THE PARLIAMENT

Opp says BJP receiving crores from firm being probed by ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Friday accused the BJP of receiving crores in donation from a company being probed by the ED for allegedly buying properties from Iqbal Mirchi, an accused in the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts, and asked whether or not it was a case of "treason".

Parliament witnesses uproar over electoral bonds issue with Congress attacking the Government and asking Prime Minister Narendra Modi to come clean on the allegations surrounding the electoral bonds scheme and accused the Government of legalising corruption.

Opposition parties led by the Congress, which protested in Parliament premises and described the issue as a "threat to democracy", sought to raise the matter in the Rajya Sabha but were not allowed to do so by the Chair. The CPI(M) along with the CPI also hit out at the government over the issue of electoral bonds and said it was "legalised political

corruption".

Several senior Congress leaders, including leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Anand Sharma, Shashi Tharoor and Manish Tewari, protested against the Government inside Parliament House premises.

The MPs held placards asking the prime minister to break his silence on the issue, raised slogans against the government and called for ending the electoral bonds scheme. The issue of electoral bonds has snowballed into a political flashpoint following a report by a news portal that the Reserve Bank of India and the Election Commission had reservations against them but were overruled by the Modi government.

Citing the same report, Congress general secretary



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said it has made four disclosures in the case of donations through electoral bonds. CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury also attacked the government on the matter.

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala cited a media report claiming the BJP took a large donation from a firm being probed by the Enforcement Directorate for carrying out transactions with and buying properties from the late Iqbal Mirchi, an accused in the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts and a close aide of global terrorist Dawood Ibrahim. There was no response from the BJP on the allegations.

Govt introduces Bill to ban e-cigarettes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ignoring the demand for reconsideration of the ban imposed on e-cigarettes and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), the Government on Friday introduced a Bill in this regard in the Parliament.

The proposed Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Import, Export, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Bill, 2019, prepared by the Ministry of Health and Family aims to replace the Ordinance that was promulgated in September 18.

Introduced by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, the bill makes the manufacturing, production, import, export, distribution, transport, sale, storage or advertisements of such alternative smoking devices a cognizable offence, attracting a jail term and a fine.

First-time violators will face a jail term of up to one year and a fine of ₹1 lakh. For subsequent offences, a jail term of up to three years or a fine of ₹5 lakh, or both.

The storage of e-cigarettes shall also be punishable with imprisonment of up to six months or a fine of up to ₹50,000, or both, it said.

The government has cited health risk to people, especially youth and issued an ordinance to ban such products.

The bill authorised officials to conduct searches in premises, stating that where such searches were not permissible, authorities might attach properties, stocks of e-cigarettes or records maintained by the manufacturer, producer exporter, transporter, importer, stockist against whom a complaint had been made. It said the owner or occupier of the place that stocks e-cigarettes should voluntarily prepare a list of such stock in his possession and without delay submit the stock to the nearest authorised officer.

However, e-cigarettes promoting trade bodies, users and other stakeholders have been opposing government's move to ban "alternative" smoking device, alleging it was a "draconian" step taken in haste to protect the conventional cigarette industry.

'Notices will lapse if RS gets disrupted'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Friday said that notices given by MPs for raising issues of public importance during Zero Hour will lapse if the proceedings of the House in the morning session are adjourned due to disruptions.

Usually, notices are carried over to the next day in case of adjournment of proceedings of the House during Zero Hour, which is scheduled every day from 1100 hrs to 1200 hrs. However, Naidu said some notices can be allowed the next day after taking special permission.

"Some people have developed a habit of disturbing the House in making their point of view and insisting it beyond a point and thereby stalling the House for a variety of reasons. Then the Chairman adjourns the House because I don't want ugly scenes to be seen by the people," he said.

Members think that automatically if they (notices) are

not taken up today, they will be taken up tomorrow. Hereafter, except by taking special permission, they will not be repeated again," he ruled.

The Chairman also directed that no placards, newspaper articles, air purifiers or masks should be displayed in the House. "Nothing should be displayed in the House," he said, and warned of action against it.

Naidu objected to letters written to him being leaked in the media even before he receives it and said the Chair would not come under such pressure tactics. He warned against running commentary by MPs and defying the Chair, saying he will "name" such members.

Naidu said it is the Chairman's prerogative to allow or disallow discussions under a particular rule. Observing that Rajya Sabha is currently holding its 250th session, the Chairman said members should cooperate in running proceedings of the House in a smooth manner.

Left, BJP spar over JNU fee hike in RS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Members of Left parties and the BJP on Friday clashed in Rajya Sabha over the issue of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students' protest against a hike in hostel fees and a draft hostel manual which imposes dress codes and curfew timings.

At the backdrop of issue rocking in the Parliament ever since the Winter session started, HRD Ministry appointed three-member panel to recommend ways to restore normal functioning in JNU, concluded its meetings on Friday and will submit its recommendations next week. Through a Zero Hour mention in the upper house, K K Ragesh of the CPI (M) raised the matter and sought a judicial probe into police action against agitating students. Immediately after this, Prabhat Jha of the BJP raised the issue of "defacement" of a yet-to-be-unveiled statue of Swami Vivekananda on the JNU campus.

Modi Govt plans to merge 2 UTs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After reorganization of J&K, the Narendra Modi Government has decided to merge two Union Territories - Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli into one and a Bill to this effect is expected to be tabled in Parliament next week. The merged UT is likely to be named as Dadra, Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and its headquarters could be Daman and Diu.

The move comes three months after reorganization of J&K into two UTs - J&K, and Ladakh. Union Minister Arjun

Meghwal on Friday said in the Lok Sabha that Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill 2019 is part of the proposed Government business for the next week.

Officials said the merger of the two UTs, located along the western coast near Gujarat, will be done for better administration and check duplications of various work.

So far, both the UTs have separate budgets and different secretariats even though they are just 35 km apart. Dadra and Nagar Haveli has just one district while Daman and Diu has two.

India, China to hold 70 celebratory activities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and China will jointly hold 70 celebratory activities to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

The modalities for celebration was agreed to during last month's informal summit meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping. The activities, including parliamentary exchanges, will demonstrate the historic connect between the two civilisations as well as their growing bilateral relationship over the

years, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement on Friday.

They will further deepen people-to-people exchanges between the two countries at all levels, including between their respective legislatures, businesses, academics, cultural and youth organisations as well as the defence forces, the MEA further said.

The two sides will also engage in cooperative projects in studying ancient maritime links between India and China through the establishment of sister-state relations between Tamil Nadu and Fujian Province, it added.

RTI applications increase by 11% in PMO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) received a slight drop in receiving RTI applications during 2018-19 compared to 2017-18 - from 12,500 to 12,143. And the ministries of Tribal Affairs and Home Affairs topped the list in rejecting the most number of RTI applications filed by the public to seek information from the Government.

However, the overall number of applications has increased by 11 per cent in 2018-19 as compared to previous year 2017-18. According to the Central Information Commission's (CIC) annual report 2018-19, 64,334 applications, which come to 4.70 per



cent of the 1.37 million applications received during 2018-19, were rejected.

The report says of the total 12143 applications, 2000 applications went to the first appeal while only 259 preferred to go to the second appeal. As per report, a total of 12,787 applications were filed with the PMO in 2016-17 as against 11,138 in 2015-16 and 12,674 during 2014-15.

As many as 7,077 such queries were raised in 2013-14 and 5,828 during 2012-13.

According to report, of the total applications, 26.54 percent applications rejected was reported by Ministry of Tribal Affairs and 16.41 per cent by the Home Ministry.

The report says as many as 13.70 lakh RTI applications were received by the registered Central Public Authorities (PAs). This is higher by 1, 36,922 or 11 per cent than the previous year 2017-18. A total 64,344 applications processed during 2018-19 showing a downward trend in rejections which have come down by 0.43% from the 5.13% reported in 2017-18.

The report shows highest number of application was received by Ministry of Finance (2.11 lakh), followed by

Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (1.47 lakh), UT of Delhi (1.28 lakh) and Ministry of Railways (1.28 lakh).

The RTI Act allows Indian citizens to seek governance-related information from Government departments in a time-bound manner. The Act has provisions to raise appeal in case the applicant is not satisfied with the response provided by the Government department concerned.

The CIC disposed of 17,188 Second Appeals and Complaints cases in 2018-19. A total of 22,736 cases were registered during the same period. At the end of the year the Commission had 29,655 cases pending before it.

25,000 tonnes of plastic waste generated every day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Increasing use of plastics by the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector among others is posing huge environmental hazards with more than 25,000 tonnes of plastic waste being generated every day. More alarmingly, 40 per cent of this plastic waste remains uncollected and littered in the environment, the Government informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.



In a written response to a question in the Lower House, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar also talked about a study conducted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in 60 major cities of India, which estimated that around 4,059 tonnes per day of plastic waste is generated from these cities.

The Minister said the demand of plastic has increased significantly due to its increased use in the FMCG sector, which has indirectly resulted into the challenge of plastic waste man-

agement. "With continued economic development, the demand for consumer goods is increasing. Among the various factors driving this growth, one of the most significant factor is increasing use of plastics by FMCG sector.

"Due to its durability, strength, inert behaviour and low cost, plastic emerged as one of the most reliable packaging material for the industries. As an outcome, the increase in demand for plastic has indirectly resulted into the chal-

lenge of plastic waste management," Javadekar said.

The Government aims to rid the country of single use plastic by 2022 as part of the Clean India (Swachh Bharat) part two campaign. Replying to another question on developing green alternatives to plastic, the Minister said due to its cheap cost, finding an alternative was a "challenging task".

"Due to various positive factors including cheap cost associated with plastic packaging, finding an ecologically sustainable and green alterna-

tive to plastic is a challenging task.

It is estimated that around 25,940 tonnes/day of plastic waste is generated in India. There are 4,773 registered plastic manufacturing/ Multi-Layer Plastic manufacturing / recycling units in the country.

Approximately 15,384 tonnes/day, which is 60 per cent of the total plastic waste is collected and recycled. This recycled plastic is used in manufacturing of several products. The remaining 10,556 tonnes/day of the plastic waste, which is estimated to be approximately 40 per cent of plastic waste generation, remains uncollected and littered in the environment," Javadekar said.

The Minister informed that an expert group has been constituted by Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology (CIPET) with respect to research and development for compostable or biodegradable technology on plastic.

MEA: Ayodhya judgment explained to other countries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has satisfactorily explained the Ayodhya judgment to other countries and the engagement with them on this matter has been "largely successful", Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said on Friday.

"It is the job of the MEA that if there is any important development in India, then we should engage others on that, and if there is any request from the diplomatic community - asking us what happened and why did it happen - then it is our job to engage them and put our perspective," Kumar said. Kumar said India engaged with some countries in Delhi itself or through Indian missions abroad on the matter of the Supreme Court's Ayodhya judgment.

SC to examine validity of amended law allowing private firms to use Aadhaar data

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday decided to examine the constitutional validity of amended Aadhaar law and the regulations allowing private entities to use the 12 digit unique number as proof of identity of consumers for opening bank accounts and getting mobile phone connections.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justice B R Gavai issued notices to the Centre and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on a PIL which alleged that the amended law and the regulations were violative of fundamental rights such as right to privacy of the citizens. A 5-judge Constitution bench, by a majority verdict of 4:1 in September last year, held the Centre's Aadhaar law as "constitutional" with certain caveats.

It held however that Aadhaar would not be manda-



tory for opening the bank accounts, mobile connections or school admissions. The government then brought the amended Bill which was passed on July 8 by Parliament and the amendments provide for use of Aadhaar number for KYC authentication on voluntary basis under the Telegraph Act, 1885, and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

The amendment and the regulations allow voluntary use of Aadhaar number for authentication and identity proof in

opening bank accounts and procuring mobile phone connections. The fresh PIL filed by S G Vombatkere, a former Army officer and Bezwada Wilson, a social activist has challenged the validity of the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Act, 2019 and the Aadhaar (Pricing of Aadhaar Authentication Services) Regulations, 2019 on grounds including that they are violative of fundamental rights of privacy, equality and freedom of speech and expression.

Protest ends in BHU, Sanskrit dept reopens

PTI ■ VARANASI

A group of Banaras Hindu University students protesting against the appointment of a Muslim professor at the Sanskrit literature department ended their 'dharma' on Friday.

The university had announced on Thursday that classes at the department would resume, indicating that the stir against the appointment of assistant professor Feroze Khan had ended.

"The Faculty of Sanskrit Vidyadharma Vigyan, Banaras Hindu University, has reopened," the BHU tweeted on Thursday.

But the protest by a small group, mostly from the RSS-affiliated student's union ABVP, continued for some hours for the 15th day on Friday till an announcement by the agitating students themselves. The group had insisted that a Muslim cannot teach Sanskrit, a stand opposed by other students.

The dharma was called off following an assurance by the dean of the Sanskrit literature department.

According to BHU student and Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) leader Chakrapani Ojha, the dean of the Sanskrit literature department met the students on



The dharma was called off following an assurance by the dean of the Sanskrit literature department

Friday and assured them of an inquiry.

Ojha said they would again resume their protest if no action was taken within 10 days into the "irregularity" in the appointment process of the assistant Sanskrit professor in the SVDV.

Meanwhile, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh said it did not agree with the students' protests.

In a statement, RSS leader Jai Prakash Lal said a meeting

was held with organisation leaders in Varanasi, in which they held that the opposition by a section of BHU students was wrong.

Lal added that they do not support the students staging dharma in the campus on this issue. A BHU spokesperson said several rounds of talks were held on Thursday in the vice chancellor's office by students, teachers, chief proctor.

It was decided to open the classroom and hold classes from the next day. Soon after the meeting, the classroom's locks were opened, the spokesperson said.

Earlier, some of the students also burnt the effigy of the vice chancellor to protest against the appointment of Khan. The protesters had demanded for a high-level probe of CBI in the matter.

Unlike his BHU brother, new Sanskrit teacher of Belur college enjoying job

Kolkata: At a time when students of the Banaras Hindu University are up in arms over appointment of a Muslim Sanskrit teacher, a man from the minority community selected as an Assistant Professor of Sanskrit by a city-based college on Friday said he was overwhelmed by warm welcome from students as well faculty members.

Ramzan Ali has been chosen to teach Sanskrit at Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira in Belur, on the outskirts of the Bengal's capital. He joined his new assignment on Tuesday last. He earlier taught at a college in north Bengal for nine years.

Ali said he was overwhelmed by the kind reception he received from the students

and faculty members. "I was welcomed by principal Swami Shastrajnandaji Maharaj, and everyone... Maharaj told me that my religious identity was not important, what mattered was my grasp over the language, my in-depth knowledge and my ability to share it with the students," Ali told PTI.

The Belur based institution is a fully residential degree college for boys affiliated to the University of Calcutta. It was founded in 1941 by the Ramakrishna Mission.

It got the 11th NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework) in the college category in 2018-19 academic session from Union HRD ministry.

Asked about the agitation

in Uttar Pradesh based BHU, Ali said he would not like to make any comment about another educational institution, but "I believe Sanskrit embodies India's inclusiveness, its rich culture. Don't forget Sanskrit is the mother of all languages. How can anyone bar people from other religions from learning and teaching Sanskrit?"

A section of students at BHU has been demonstrating against the appointment of Feroze Khan as the assistant professor of the varsity's Sanskrit department.

Although the BHU authorities backed him, Khan has not been able to take classes.

The university tweeted on Thursday that the faculty of Sanskrit vidya dharma vigyan

has reopened after days of protests.

Unlike the BHU professor, Ali, who is in his early 40s, said he never faced any discrimination as a Sanskrit teacher.

"I never felt that I was out of place or unwanted while studying or teaching Sanskrit. Here, at the Belur college, the management has arranged for my accommodation and ensured that I do not face any inconvenience," the assistant professor maintained.

A student of the Sanskrit department at Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira said he was looking forward to attending Ali's classes.

It is "unfair" to question the religious identity of a teacher, he said.

"Ali sir has just joined, so

far I haven't had the opportunity to attend any of his classes. I am looking forward to it," the student added.

The principal of the college could not be contacted for his comment.

Ali said since the time of joining the college on November 19, he is liked by students and has even joined their 'adda' after class hours.

"I have already taken classes of first and second years and the students have showered me with love. Some of them have even commented why I did not join before the Teachers' Day on September 5 so that they could have shown me their love and respect. And I tell them my greatest reward will be if they follow teachers' words."

PTI

Bengal Gov calls for dialogue over para-teachers' stir

PTI ■ KOLKATA

With the indefinite fast by para-teachers in West Bengal to press for a hike in their salaries entering its eighth day on Friday, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar appealed to all sides concerned to initiate a dialogue for resolving the issue.

Over 1,000 para-teachers, who are contractual teachers in government-run schools, are on a sit-in since November 11.

At least 37 of the protesting teachers are on an indefinite fast from November 15 and about 10 of them have fallen sick, the organisation which is spearheading the para-teachers' movement said.

"@MamataOfficial. I appeal (to) all sides for dialogue at the highest level as over 1000 para-teachers are on a sit-in since November 11 and 37 of them are on an indefinite fast from Friday," he tweeted.

Referring to the death of para-teacher Revati Raut in West Midnapore district, Dhankhar tweeted, "Reported death of Revati Raut, in West Midnapore and illness of others worrisome."

Raut, a middle-aged para-teacher who had taken part in the demonstration by para-teachers here for several days, died at her residence at Debra in West Midnapore on Thursday, Bhagirath Ghosh, co-convenor of the 'Para-Teacher Oikyo Manch' which is spearheading the movement, said.

PTI

TMC Lok Sabha party leader Sudip Bandopadhyay denied that a para-teacher has died and claimed it as "a false propaganda by BJP".

"It is a false propaganda by BJP to malign our state government. Not a single para-teacher has died. The state government has taken care of their needs and demands. The BJP is only trying to score political brownie points," Bandopadhyay said.

BJP national general secretary and Bengal minder Kailash Vijayargiya said the authoritarian Mamata Banerjee government is so arrogant that it has failed to listen to the pleas of the para-teachers.

"A para-teacher has died, thousands of para-teachers are on strike. But the Mamata Banerjee government is completely silent on the issue. Shame on it," Vijayargiya said.

Meanwhile, Lok Sabha witnessed heated arguments between treasury and opposition benches on Friday when ruling BJP MPs from West Bengal raised the issue of the strike by para-teachers in the state.

As soon as BJP MP Locket Chatterjee started speaking on the issue, TMC members rushed towards the well of the House and said she was misguiding it.

Ghosh said there has been no word from the state government about ways to address their demands for hike in salary and pay parity with Group D employees.

Country united on temple construction: Shahnawaz Hussain

Jaipur (PTI): BJP national spokesperson Shahnawaz Hussain said here on Friday that the entire country is united in supporting the construction of a Ram Temple in

Ayodhya. The former Union Minister said two big issues — the removal of Article 370 from Kashmir and the case of the Ayodhya Temple — that were

going on since independence have been resolved after the Modi government came to power at the Centre.

"Today the whole country is united to build Ram temple," he said. "Iqbal Ansari, who was fighting in Supreme Court on the issue of construction of the Ram temple, has also accepted this decision.

But Asaduddin Owaisi is not ready to accept the court verdict. There has been solidarity with the temple construction in the country, brotherhood has increased.

However, Owaisi does not accept this growing brotherhood," Hussain said while talking to reporters at the BJP's state headquarters.

Hussain described the alliance of the Shiv Sena, Congress and NCP in Maharashtra as a mismatch, saying that despite being the number four party Congress has agreed to join hands with Shiv Sena for its greed of power.

Telangana HC rejects plea against privatising bus routes in State

Hyderabad: In a breather to the K Chandrasekhar Rao-led TRS Government, the Telangana High Court on Friday dismissed a petition challenging the State Cabinet decision of privatising over 5,000 bus routes.

A Division Bench, comprising Chief Justice Raghendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A Abhishek Reddy, dismissed the petition of PL Vishveshwar Rao, vice-president of the Telangana Jana Samithi, challenging the cabinet's November 2 decision to privatise permits of 5,100 TSRTC (Telangana State Road Transport Corporation) routes.

Advocate General BS Prasad said he gave an under-

taking to the court saying that due procedure would be followed by the Government while awarding the routes to private parties. The court said the State Government has the authority to take a decision on privatising the routes.

After the cabinet meeting on November 2, KCR had said the cabinet decided to award as many as 5,100 bus routes to private operators to maintain healthy competition and also warned that the rest of the routes would also be given to private operators if the RTC employees do not join duty.

Employees and workers unions of TSRTC started the indefinite strike from October 5 across Telangana on a call given by the JAC of TSRTC,

demanding merger of the RTC with the Government and recruitment to various posts, among others.

Later the unions said they were willing to drop the merger demand if it becomes a hurdle for the government to hold talks with them.

The Telangana High Court on November 18 directed the Commissioner of Labour to take a call on whether the ongoing strike by the unions of TSRTC should be referred to the Labour Court or not, in two weeks to decide the legality of the stir.

Two days ago, the unions said they were willing to join duty if the government provides a congenial atmosphere.

Office of the Development Commissioner for Handicrafts
Ministry of Textiles, Government of India
West Block 7, R.K. Puram, Sector-1, New Delhi

Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) invites sealed bids from interested applicants for licensing of 18 Guest Rooms of Twin Bedded and 15 Dormitories having 81 beds for a period of 3 years for Deendayal Hastkala Sankul (Trade Centre & Museum), Varanasi.

The pre bid meeting shall be held on 25th November, 2019 at 12:00 Noon at Office of the Development Commissioner for Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India; West Block 7, R.K. Puram, Sector-1, New Delhi.

Last date for submission of bids is 12th December, 2019 not later than 12:00 Noon. Bidders are requested to refer RFP document for further instructions.

Interested applicants can download Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) and request for Proposal (RFP) documents from CPP website <https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app>. Copy of NIT and RFP documents will also be available on www.handicrafts.nic.in from 18th November, 2019.

davp 41103 / 11 / 0015 / 1920

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No. SSA/Esst/TT&P/EPB/2020/378/2019/10284 Date :22.11.2019
Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam (Samagra Siksha Abhiyan) invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed exercise book manufacturers for the supply of Evaluation and Practice Books for class -VII (Single Line and Plain).

To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website <https://assamtenders.gov.in>, with proof of payment of non refundable tender fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

Sd/- Mission Director,
SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Notice Inviting e-Tender

No. SSA/Esst/TT&P/EPB/2020/379/2019/10285 Date :22.11.2019
Mission Director, Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam (Samagra Siksha Abhiyan) invites tender through e-Tendering process from reputed exercise book manufacturers for the supply of Evaluation and Practice Books for class -VIII (Single Line and Plain).

To participate in this tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of class-II (minimum) and have to register in the portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in> by themselves.

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Sd/- Mission Director,
SSA, Assam, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

NC, Cong workers join BJP in Jammu & Reasi

PTI ■ JAMMU

Several National Conference and Congress activists on Friday joined the BJP at separate functions in Jammu, Kathua and Reasi districts of this region, a saffron party spokesman said.

Two prominent NC activists from Kishtwar — Inderjit and Ranjit — along with their supporters joined the party in the presence of senior leaders including Jammu & Kashmir unit president Ravinder Raina and former Deputy Chief Minister Kavinder Gupta at party headquarters here, he said.

Welcoming the new entrants into the party fold,

Raina said the BJP's commitment to work for the welfare of the people and the strong belief on "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas" policy has touched the lives of people living in the remote areas of the region.

"The BJP believes that there is lot of work to be done for the welfare of the common masses and hence we need committed party activists who can serve the nation and the society without any self interest," he said.

The new entrants assured the BJP leadership that they would promote the party's policies with their "dedicated and selfless" working, the spokesman said.

Shops, businesses shut for third consecutive day

Srinagar: Most shops and other business establishments in Kashmir were closed on Friday, the third consecutive day of a Valley-wide shutdown following a brief semblance of normalcy.

On Wednesday, posters warning shopkeepers against opening their shutters as well as public transport operators appeared at several places in the city and elsewhere in the Valley, officials said.

This ended the sense of the last few weeks that life was getting back to normal.

Main markets in the city and most other areas in the Valley were shut and shops did not open even for a few hours in the morning as they had been doing for the last few weeks.

Public transport was also largely off the roads and there were fewer private vehicles



than usual, officials said. However, some auto-rickshaws and inter-district cabs were plying.

Jamia Masjid, the grand mosque of Kashmir, was closed for prayers for the 16th con-

secutive Friday — ever since August 5 when the Centre announced the revoking of Jammu & Kashmir's special status under Article 370 and its bifurcation into two union territories.

Authorities fear that vested interests might exploit large gatherings at the grand mosque to fuel protests, officials said.

Pre-paid mobile phones and all internet services continued to remain suspended since August 5.

Most top level and second rung separatist politicians are in preventive custody while mainstream leaders, including two former Chief Ministers, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, have been either detained or placed under house arrest.

The Government has detained former Chief Minister and sitting Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar Farooq Abdullah under the controversial Public Safety act, a law enacted by his father and National Conference founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1978 when he was the Chief Minister.

Madras HC stays order on TN Govt's efforts to legalise temple land encroachments

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Government's efforts to meddle with the encroached lands measuring thousands of acres belonging to the temples in the State administered by the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department came to a nought on Friday as the Madras High Court stayed the Government Order issued on August 30 in this regard.

A Bench consisting of Justices M Sathyanarayana and N Seshasayee stayed the sections of the GO which had empowered the State to buy the

encroached land from the encroachers and sell it back to them with pattas.

The contention of the petitioner T R Ramesh was that the GO was issued by the Government to circumvent the court order of February 2018 y which it had asked the HR&CE Department to furnish the details of more than 50,000 acres of prime land owned by the temples that had vanished.

Though the Court had asked the HR&CE Dept to furnish the details in six months, nothing has come out even after 18 months. Meanwhile the misappropriation of the temple lands continued with the active con-



nivance of the officials of the HR&CE Department, pointed out Ramesh, president, Temple Worshippers Society, the main petitioner.

In Friday's order the judges asked the Department to collect the details of the encroached lands and the

action taken report to retrieve the same from the encroachers.

"While staying the section of the GO in the interim verdict, the bench directed the Commissioner HR&CE to file a detailed report regarding Hindu temple lands, extent, encroachments and the steps taken to clear the encroachments. We will soon see skeletons tumbling down from the cupboards of the Government," said Ramesh.

It may be noted that the HR&CE Department is already in the eye of a controversy regarding the thefts of nearly 5,000 antique temple idols from the temples under its jurisdiction.

Alwar police asks 9 Muslim cops to shave beards, withdraws order day later

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The police in Rajasthan's Alwar ordered nine Muslim members of the force to shave their beards, only to withdraw its instructions a day later.

The original order on Thursday said the nine policemen were asked to cut their beards so that they acted and looked "unbiased".

As the news spread, on Friday Alwar SP Anil Paris Deshmukh withdrew own order. Police said they had earlier given permission to 32

Muslim personnel to sport beards. Thursday's order withdrew this permission for nine of them.

The remaining 23 policemen were allowed to continue with their beards, police said. "Police should not only work in an unbiased manner but they should also look unbiased," the SP initially told reporters.

"There is a provision of the State Government which allows the HoD (head of department) to permit policemen to keep beards," he said.

Sena-Cong-NCP get the better of BJP in Maha mayoral polls



Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray along with his wife Rashmi Thackeray and son and Yuva Sena chief Aditya Thackeray felicitates Mumbai's newly-elected mayor Kishori Pednekar, in Mumbai on Friday

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The BJP was outsmarted on Friday by emerging political combinations in Maharashtra and lost mayoral polls in Latur and Ulhasnagar despite having a majority in both civic bodies.

The Shiv Sena managed to win the posts of mayor and deputy mayor in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane.

The BJP, however, managed to keep its flock together and got the support of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena to win the posts of mayor and deputy mayor in Nashik.

In Latur, the Congress Vikrant Gojgunde was elected mayor, in what is being seen as a setback for former BJP minister Sambhaji Nilangekar.

In Ulhasnagar, the BJP, despite having a majority in the municipal corporation, was

beaten by former saffron ally Shiv Sena which won the mayor's post after it got the support of the NCP, Congress and a local outfit called Team Omi Kalani (TOK).

In Mumbai, the Sena's Kishori Pednekar and Suhas Wadkar were elected unopposed as mayor and deputy mayor respectively as the BJP did not field candidates for the two posts. The Sena's Naresh Mhaske and Pallavi Kadam were elected mayor and deputy mayor respectively of Thane Municipal Corporation.

In Parbhani, Anita Sonkamble and Bhagwan Waghmare of the Congress, which is the largest party in the civic body, were elected mayor and deputy mayor.

In Nashik, Satish Kulkarni of the BJP was elected mayor after a group of its corporators, who were cosying up to the

Sena, stayed back.

With five MNS corporators also voting for the BJP candidates in the Nashik Municipal Corporation, the latter won the deputy mayor's post as well, with 82-year Bhikubai Bagul getting the post unopposed.

In the 70-member Latur civic body, BJP had 36 and Congress 33 corporators while the NCP had one. One BJP corporator died and the lone NCP corporator joined the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi.

During polls on Friday, two BJP corporators and the lone one from VBA voted for the Congress, while one corporator from the Congress, Sachin Mhaske, was absent.

A rebel BJP corporator, Chandrakant Birajdar, was elected Latur deputy mayor after he defeated his former colleague Bhagyashree Koulkhere with the help of the Congress.

Although the ruling BJP had a clear majority in the Nashik Municipal Corporation, the Shiv Sena tried garnering support from the Congress, NCP and MNS, similar to its efforts for forming a government in the state.

Former mayor Balasaheb Sanap had left the BJP and joined the NCP to contest the recent state Assembly polls, after the former denied him a ticket. He then went on to join the Shiv Sena.

Around 10 to 15 of Sanap's supporters were won over by Shiv Sena, making things difficult for the BJP.

While Ajay Boraste was the Sena's candidate for the Nashik mayor's post, Kamallesh Bodke was chosen by the party for the deputy mayor's post. However, all equations changed at the last minute, when MNS decided to back the BJP in NMC.

Our allies favour formation of govt with Sena: Cong-NCP

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The NCP and the Congress said on Friday their smaller allies have backed the idea of forming a government in Maharashtra with the Shiv Sena to keep its estranged ally BJP out of power in the state.

Congress and NCP representatives on Friday held a meeting with their pre-poll allies here, which was attended by leaders of the Samajwadi Party, the RPI (Kawade faction), the RPI (Kharat faction), Raju Shettil Swabhimani Paksha, the Peasants and Workers' Party (PWP), the CPI(M), the Janata Dal and others.

"Our pre-poll allies have supported the idea of forming a government with the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra to keep the BJP away from power," Maharashtra NCP

chief Jayant Patil told reporters after the meeting here.

He was accompanied by senior Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan.

Patil said that during the meeting, leaders of the smaller allies were apprised of the progress the Congress-NCP have made so far towards the formation of government in the state, where poll results were announced nearly a month ago.

"These parties, including the CPI(M), want a government minus the BJP for the development of the state and for addressing agrarian issues," he said.

Patil, a former Maharashtra minister, said the Congress and the NCP will hold discussions with the Shiv Sena, following which the parties will stake claim to form the government.

However, he did not specify exactly when the parties will stake claim to form the government.

"We will speak to the Shiv Sena in a day or two," he added.

Chavan said the alliance partners have prepared a draft Common Minimum Programme (CMP), which is to be cleared by top leaders of the three parties.

"The final CMP will guide the actions of the proposed government," the former chief minister said.

Talking to reporters, Samajwadi Party leader Abu Azmi made a pitch for ending communalism in the country.

"The Shiv Sena will have to tweak some of its policies if it wants our support...we will have to form the government to obliterate communalism," he said.

Azmi said the prospective

government should be fair to Dalits, minorities, farmers and the weak.

The MLA-elect said his party was not opposed to Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray becoming the chief minister and added he was not vying for a ministerial berth.

The state has been facing a political crisis after the Sena broke its three-decade-long ties with the BJP after the latter declined to share the chief minister's post.

The BJP and the Sena, which fought the Assembly polls in alliance, had secured a comfortable majority by winning 105 and 56 seats, respectively, in the 288-member Assembly.

The NCP and the Congress, pre-poll allies, won 54 and 44 seats, respectively.

The state is currently under President's rule.

NCP takes a jibe at BJP over govt formation

PTI ■ MUMBAI

NCP chief Sharad Pawar has finally "outwitted" the "so-called Chanakya of the Indian politics", the party said on Friday, as it inches closer to forming a government with Shiv Sena and Congress in Maharashtra.

The NCP's chief spokesperson Nawab Malik also reiterated that the throne of Delhi could not make Maharashtra bow before it.

"@PawarSpeaks Sahab has finally outwitted the so-called Chanakya of Indian politics. The throne of Delhi could not make Maharashtra bow down before it. Jai Maharashtra," Malik tweeted, without naming anyone.

It is believed that Malik's

jibe was directed at Union home minister and BJP president Amit Shah, who is often credited for being instrumental in the BJP's victories in several polls and government formations in the country.

The BJP and the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena had contested the October 21 Maharashtra Assembly polls jointly and won 105 and 56 seats respectively.

However, the saffron partners fell out after the Sena persisted with its demand for sharing the chief minister's post on rotational basis.

Now in a bid to form a government, the Sena is in talks with the NCP and Congress, who have won 54 and 44 seats respectively in the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly.

Maharashtra has been under the President's rule since November 12, after no party came forward with enough numbers to form a government.

Government of India
Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers
Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals

Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals invites applications for the post of Additional Industrial Adviser in Level-13 of pay matrix (Rs. 1,23,100-2,15,900) on deputation/short term contract basis.

Detailed vacancy circular including requisite educational qualification, job description, experience etc. for the post is available on the website of the Department www.chemicals.nic.in. Applications in the prescribed format may be sent through proper channel within 60 days from the date of publication of this advertisement in Employment News at the following address:

H. Kam Suanthang, Director (Admn.)
 Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals
 Room No. 236-A, A-Wing, 2nd Floor,
 Shastri Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road,
 New Delhi-110 001

davp 02101 / 11 / 0011 / 1920

Economic insecurity of youths to shape India's politics: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a growth slowdown and unemployment issues, India's politics will be increasingly shaped by the economic insecurity of its vast youth population, the Economist Intelligence Unit said in a research note on Friday.

The issue of unemployment and underemployment has been an unavoidable topic in India's politics and slower economic growth has translated to poor employment numbers.

"Although Prime Minister Narendra Modi successfully won re-election for the Bharatiya Janata Party earlier this year on a platform of strong leadership and emphasis on social and security issues, politics will increasingly be shaped by the economic insecurity of India's vast youth population," the research note by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) said.

Citing Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy data, the EIU said that in October 2019, the unemployment rate rose to a three-year high of 8.5 per cent, up from 7.2 per cent in September.

Notwithstanding that the country is expected to benefit from a favourable "demographic dividend" over the next few decades, the rate of job creation is lagging behind the rate at which the labour force is growing, it said.

The World Bank estimated in 2018, that India needs to create around 8.1 million jobs a year to maintain its employment rate.

"However, official employment data are spotty, given the difficulties of measuring employment in the vast informal sector and the political sensitivity attached to the figure," the note said.

According to the EIU, the government's near-term stimulus efforts have been "inad-

equated", given the scope of the job-creation problem and "structural reform rather than a short-term stimulus is required to address the country's job-creation problem".

Historically, voting in India has been driven by traditional caste factors rather than the performance of the government.

"Having now delivered most of the issues on the Hindu-nationalist agenda that was popular with his supporters, Modi is likely to face a challenge in retaining his popularity as voters grow increasingly disappointed with the lack of progress on the economic front," the EIU noted.

It cited the revoking of the special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir and the recent Supreme Court ruling that calls for the construction of a Hindu temple on a disputed piece of land in Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh).

According to the EIU, the

BJP is expected to gain a simple majority in the Rajya Sabha by 2021 and this will potentially allow the government to pass more contentious bills aimed at overhauling the labour market.

"However, its ability to push against strong unions, which oppose the relaxation of labour laws to benefit businesses, will be limited. Unions had already stated strong opposition to the proposed labour law changes, particularly the industrial relations code," it noted.

The strong political influence wielded by the unions means that Indian labour markets are likely to remain highly regulated in comparison with other countries.

"Over the long term, inadequate progress on addressing India's labour market issues will keep the political field ripe for enterprising politicians running on a job-creation platform," it noted.

'Cong wants a grand temple in Ayodhya'

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The Congress wants a "grand temple" to be built in Ayodhya, Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot said on Friday, days after the Supreme Court cleared the way for the construction of the shrine in the Hindu holy town.

He also said the court's decision was acceptable to all and people should now stop doing politics on the issue.

In its verdict announced on November 9, the Supreme Court backed the construction of a Ram temple by a trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya, and ruled that an alternative five-acre plot be allotted for building a mosque in the town.

"Everyone has welcomed the decision and the Congress party wants a grand temple be built there (Ayodhya)," Pilot told reporters in Dausa district.

"We have to happily respect and maintain that decision. Now we have to stop doing politics on this issue; the world is moving forward," he said.

People who had been doing politics over the case for the past 30 years understand now that no one will benefit politically by raising the issue again and again, he added, without naming anyone.

Speaking about the Congress' performance in the

recent civic body polls in Rajasthan and assembly elections in some states, Pilot said there is a change in the country's atmosphere.

"(Congress) performance in the recent civic body elections reflects that the organisation and workers have worked hard and people have liked the government's work. State assembly results in Haryana and the alliance government taking shape in Maharashtra reflect that the atmosphere in the country is changing," he said.

"The way we have worked in Rajasthan, I am happy to say that the Congress organisation worked as hard and with as much preparedness as it did when it was in the opposition," the deputy chief minister said.

The Congress registered an impressive victory in the civic body elections held in the state earlier this month to elect 2,000 councillors. The party got a clear majority in 20 of the 49 municipal areas that went to polls. Pilot said the BJP had always believed urban areas to be its stronghold, but the party could only manage a majority in six areas.

He said while the BJP won all 25 Lok Sabha seats in Rajasthan six months ago, people had given the mandate to the Congress now.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD
NOTICE Date: 21.11.2019

Railway Claims Tribunal, Allahabad Bench, Prayagraj invites eligible candidates for walk-in-interview for shortlisting candidates for the post of Peon and Safaiwala to be engaged temporarily on contractual basis as per terms and conditions decided by Railway Board (Ministry of Railway) as per the details given below.

Name of the post and Eligibility :

- Peon-10th class pass
- Safaiwala-less than 10th class pass

Age limit : 22 to 35 years
Period of engagement : Temporary
Monthly Payment :
 Peon - As per minimum wages in force
 Safaiwala (unskilled)-As per minimum wages in force

Note: Candidate to bring along with them 2 copies of their bio-data, Adhar card/identity card, 4 passport size photos and documents supporting eligibility.

Place, date and time for the walk-in-interview: Railway Claims Tribunal, Allahabad Bench office, Valmiki Chauraha, Civil Lines, Prayagraj on 29.11.2019, Friday at 11.00 hrs.

Willing candidates may also visit RCT website www.rct.indianrail.gov.in and North Central Railway website www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in for further details. 1683/19 (S)

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Australia exploring setting up offshore varsity in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Australia is exploring the possibility of setting up offshore campuses of its premier universities across India and considering mutual recognition of degrees by the two countries, in a move to eye further expansion in the already-closed educational ties.

In an interview to PTI, Australian Education Minister Dan Tehan said the two issues were discussed in his meeting with Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' on Friday.

The move assumes significance in wake of the Indian government mulling giving a green light to foreign universities for setting up of their campuses in India.

The issue has been long debated in India and the University Grants Commission (UGC) currently allows foreign universities to operate in India only in collaboration with an Indian higher educational insti-

The move assumes significance in wake of the Indian government mulling giving a green light to foreign universities for setting up of their campuses in India.

tution partner.

"We discussed about whether we can promote offshore campuses of Australian universities and set up their campuses in India," said Tehani, who is in India on a three-day visit that ends on Friday.

"We also discussed whether we can look at the establishment of Indian universities' offshore campuses in Australia so that it is a mutually-beneficial approach," the minister said.

With the possible change in rules, foreign universities will be allowed to set up their own campuses in India. The idea has been proposed in the Higher Education Commission of India Bill (HECI), which is like-

ly to be placed before the Union cabinet soon.

"We have begun the conversation on setting up of offshore campuses in India and this is something both sides want to explore considering the fact that Australia, through its offshore campuses, educates nearly a quarter of our international students," Tehan said.

"We are interested in making a progress on this, but there has to be reciprocity," he said. "We have also said this to the Indian side that if they want to explore an offshore campus in Australia, we will be prepared to look into that."

According to official statistics, there are 1.9-lakh Indian students in Australia at present.

Exploring a 'France-like' agreement, Tehan said: "We discussed about mutual recognition of qualifications by the two countries. India has an arrangement with France and we want to put in place a same framework which will enable us to more freely exchange students or fellows."

The Australian education minister termed the India's proposed new National Education Policy (NEP) "ambitious". "We want to work with India in helping it to implement its reform agenda. There are similarities between what (the) Indian government is planning in NEP and we have just reviewed the Australian qualification framework," Tehan said.

"We have also offered through our regulator to have an exchange of views about how we use our regulator to ensure quality and excellence," he said. "We can help in a system Indian govt is putting in place."

Unhappy with probe, Pansare's kin seek change in investigator

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The family of slain activist Govind Pansare on Friday filed an application seeking change of investigating officer in the case, even as the Bombay High Court cautioned that such requests could have a negative impact on the probe. The activist was shot and injured on February 16, 2015 near his house in Kolhapur in western Maharashtra, and died four days later. A special investigation team (SIT) of the Maharashtra police's Criminal Investigation

Department (CID) is probing Pansare's killing.

In its application, Pansare's family said it was not satisfied with the manner in which the investigating officer was handling the probe.

A division bench of Justices SC Dharmadhikari and RI Chagla, however, noted that such an application could have a negative impact and scuttle the probe.

The probe agency's counsel Ashok Mundargi told the court it would file its reply to the application by December 19.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD
 No.: S/Sale/611/e-auction programme/2019-20 Date: 20.11.2019
E-Auction Notice No. 9
E-auction programme for December - 2019

It is intimated that scrap materials available in all Divisions and Depots of North Central Railway will be auctioned through e-auction and all organizers will conduct the auction of their area. **Scrap Items:** P. Way Scrap, Scrap Rail, Cast Iron Scrap, Condemned rolling Stock, Non ferrous and Non metallic Scrap, Turning & Boring, Condemned Oil /Paints Drums, Condemned Machinery & plants, Condemned Vehicles, Condemned office equipments, Foundry Slag, Released overhead MS/GI tanks, Released ferrous scrap of train lighting fans, Released MS/GI pipe line, foundry skull, Workshop MS scrap and other MS scrap.

S.N.	Date of Auction	Depot/Division	e-auction conducted by
1.	05.12.2019 (Thursday)		DY. CMM/System/NCR/Jhansi (www.irebs.gov.in through website)
2.	12.12.2019 (Thursday)	GSD/NCR/Jhansi	
3.	19.12.2019 (Thursday)		
4.	31.12.2019 (Tuesday)		
5.	13.12.2019 (Friday)	GSD/NCR/CNB	DY. CMM/GSD/CNB (www.irebs.gov.in through website)
6.	27.12.2019 (Friday)		
7.	05.12.2019 (Thursday)		Sr. DMM/NCR/AGC (www.irebs.gov.in through website)
8.	12.12.2019 (Friday)	AGC DIVISION	
9.	19.12.2019 (Thursday)		
10.	27.12.2019 (Friday)		
11.	04.12.2019 (Wednesday)		Sr. DMM/NCR/ALD (www.irebs.gov.in through website)
12.	13.12.2019 (Friday)	ALD DIVISION	
13.	23.12.2019 (Monday)		
14.	31.12.2019 (Tuesday)		
15.	03.12.2019 (Tuesday)		Sr. DMM/NCR/JHS (www.irebs.gov.in through website)
16.	11.12.2019 (Wednesday)	JHS DIVISION	
17.	20.12.2019 (Friday)		

Special Conditions: 1. All type of scraps will be through e-auction mode www.irebs.gov.in website. In the event of auction not being completed on the same day, auction may be continued on the next days also (Applicable only for Dy.CMM/SD/JHS). 2. The unsold lots of e-auction will also be included in next e-auction of respective depot. 3. The intending purchaser may inspect the lot of scrap material before the auctions during working hours. 4. To purchase material above Rs. 5 Lacs, the purchaser must be registered with Sale Tax department. 5. For further details on auctions (like catalogues, last sold rates in auctions & other details), Please visit North Central Railway's website "www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in". 6. For further detail regarding e-auction Please visit "www.irebs.gov.in" website. 1677/19 (S)

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Clean campaigns

Electoral bonds are deeply flawed and more than debate, we need to create a transparent module of political fund-raising



The opacities about funding through electoral bonds have been discussed for quite some time now, benefitting almost all political parties in varying degrees, though the latest expose, courtesy transparency activists accessing RTI documents, has stirred up a big storm in the ongoing Parliament session. That the bonds would further institutionalise the politico-corporate nexus has long been established through the Opposition, which has clearly received the thinnest slices of such donations, is now crying foul. What was under the table is just legitimate now, allowing any corporation, trust, NGO or individual to donate unlimited amounts of money to our political parties. The lies have been piling up ever since the electoral bonds were introduced. For example, while it was claimed that the secret alphanumeric code would insure the donor from being tracked or identified, documents have proven that the State Bank of India (SBI) not only knows who bought how many bonds for whom, it is even required to furnish the information to probe agencies when they need them. The blackout of information has only been in the public domain. Latest documents have proven a more insidious link and a cavalier dismissal of objections. The bond movements, it appears, were closely watched by the Finance Ministry and the protests by SBI and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) over grey areas were turned down. The Election Commission was summarily dismissed as well. And while the ruling party indeed sought the Opposition's views on the scheme and assured transparency to them, it had set up a clandestine architecture. Yet all internal communications on the subject were denied by several Ministers when grilled in the Parliament. In short, the Government of the day successfully firewalled any criticism and set up a system which implied crony capitalism. Donors, by virtue of the guarantee of anonymity, could route kickbacks to parties and the latter would have to reward the largesse of the former with "friendly" policy-making and trading off favours. The poll panel had earlier claimed that electoral bonds made its job of tracking donations from overseas and Government companies difficult. The Government had consistently defended itself saying since the bonds were purchased through banking channels, there was no question of slush money being in circulation, and there was an in-built accountability. But fact of the matter is that accountability is for a few privileged eyes only to decide whether the funds are ethically intended or a backdoor form of wheeling-dealing. Remember, apart from a sealing on cash donations, there is no upper limit for donations. The bonds may be issued by banks but they can never gauge the larger understanding between donor and recipient that drives such transactions.

Real transparency demands that the haze of doubts be eliminated once and for all. Else, the electoral bonds scheme will poison the electoral process rather than cleansing it. Both the donor and political recipient must be identified clearly. Some reformists have suggested State funding, at least at the candidate level, but that would involve an estimated outlay of ₹2,000 crore, something, experts say, can be achieved by truncating the MPLADS (MP Local Area Development Scheme) allocations from five to four years. Direct funding will undoubtedly encourage entrants to participate in elections, clean up the system, reduce dependency on parties to call the shots and dilute the bargaining strength of criminal candidates with muscle and money power. More people in the fray will further motivate the bigger parties to democratise themselves. In the end, elections and their management are an expensive affair and streamlining campaign funding is a work in progress. The main purpose for which electoral bonds were introduced, the need to remove ambiguous sources of money coming into the electoral process and stash cash, has still not been achieved, if seizures during the May Lok Sabha elections are anything to go by. The Election Commission, too, has to set realistic limits of electoral spending, the sum of ₹70 lakh per candidate too little to make good. A workable budget per Lok Sabha constituency, coupled with full disclosure of corporate donations, should be the way forward. Former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi had once suggested creating a National Electoral Fund to which all donors could contribute. The allocations to political parties would then be in proportion to the votes they got. Not only would this protect the identity of donors, it would also weed out black money from politics. But neither the corporate nor the political class believes in such altruism or accountability. So a sustained push by the citizenry may take long but is the only way to drive change.

Kolkata turns pink

Pink-ball cricket is upon us. Is it going to just be a gimmick or a reality of the modern game?



The lights that shine across all major monuments of Kolkata had changed their hue from blue, which is Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's favourite colour, to pink. This to acknowledge India's first day-night Test match and its uniquely coloured pink ball. It was appropriate that this new format was being played in India's greatest cricket ground, Kolkata's Eden Gardens, and the crowds included the likes of Banerjee and Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Unfortunately, for the latter, even though Indian cricketers were polite with her while being introduced, they were nothing like that to Bangladesh's batsmen, bundling them out for just 106. Watching India bat under the lights at the end of a Friday is a good way to begin the weekend, according to most Indian cricket fans and therein lies the greatest attraction of pink-ball cricket. The Test format might be the longest and most challenging of all and the most adaptable of major sports but it is unwieldy both for fans at the stadium and even those watching on television. The shorter variants of the game, both one-day internationals and T20, are played in the evenings and afternoons to attract more spectators into the stadium. Moving Tests towards the evening should help get both working-age people and students in droves.

However, what would really make the game interesting is a viable opponent. Taking nothing away from the stellar performances of India's outstanding pace battery away, Bangladesh has barely put up a fight. Our neighbour has improved tremendously over the past few years but this is clearly a team in strife, thanks to corruption allegations that have cost them their best player, Shakib Al Hasan. Success on the field and a good game are what ensure the long-term viability of a sport or format. India was initially aghast at T20 cricket and commentators called it a travesty. Then, it won the inaugural T20 World Cup in South Africa in a thrilling contest with Pakistan. And well, we know the rest. Would better competition have made a major difference? One could argue that there are few good teams in the sport right now. But at least India has made a start and the best part of pink-ball cricket may be when our boys tour — no more early morning starts to watch when they travel to Australia and New Zealand and morning cricket when India is in the Caribbean. As for us fans, there is a long way to go.

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Forget the brag, get real

Like in J&K, where the Government's decision to split the former State into two Union Territories has led to resentment, undemocratic methods are allegedly under way in Nagaland, too



ASHOK K MEHTA

On November 20, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated in the Rajya Sabha that after more than 100 days, the situation in Jammu & Kashmir was "normal" and that not a single bullet was fired, nor a death reported in Kashmir ever since the abrogation of Article 370. The normalcy claim was, however, debunked by a total shutdown the very next day. Shah must know that the absence of violence should not be construed as peace. Lockdown in the region has not been lifted: Political leaders and activists are still in detention and internet and cell phone services are totally or partially shut. It is, perhaps, too early to celebrate the mirage of normalcy.

Now, rewind to last month, October 31 will be remembered for more than one reason. It marked the deadline for converting the former State of Jammu & Kashmir into two Union Territories — Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh — following the abrogation of Article 370. It was also for the first time in the history of India that a full-fledged State anywhere in the country was reduced into two Union Territories, whose security would be managed centrally. Two Lieutenant Governors were sworn in on the same day as Sardar Patel's 144th birth anniversary and Indira Gandhi's 35th death anniversary, the latter becoming coincidental but meaningful.

October 31 was also the deadline set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the closure of the Naga identity issue, following the Nagaland Framework Agreement of August 2017. Like in Jammu & Kashmir, undemocratic methods are allegedly under way here, too, to achieve a political solution to India's oldest and mother of all insurgencies in Nagaland.

Ironically, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah) or NSCN (IM)'s demand for a separate flag and Constitution — both done away with in Jammu & Kashmir — has created a flutter among the Northeastern States, who enjoy special status under Article 371 of the Constitution. The opening up of two fronts is never a wise option with adversaries like Pakistan and China scouting for opportunities.

Still, the Government can rejoice for achieving its long-standing nationalistic agenda of terminating Jammu & Kashmir's special status and integrating it with the Union of India, though without pondering over the long-term consequences, as premature self-congratulations indicate. The aim of the political surgery is to end terrorism, corruption and dynastic rule, which will put Jammu & Kashmir on the path of development — these ills, the Government feels, have been the result of its special status. Lockdown in Jammu & Kashmir has crossed the 100-day mark despite the international community urging us to restore human rights currently being denied to the people. The Supreme Court, too, had asked the Government to come up with a plan by November 10 to relax restrictions.



On November 14, Constitutional issues relating to Article 370 and Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, came up for a second hearing but was moved to a new date, December 14. In the first hearing on October 4, the Constitution bench had overruled a plea for an interim order, staying the implementation of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, by October 31. It said that "we can always turn the clock back."

The independence of the judiciary against a strong executive and legislature is faced with a test. Business and trade are at a standstill. The president of the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Sheikh Ashiq, pegged the loss to the business sector at over ₹10,000 crore. But the overall damage to Kashmir's economy could be double this figure.

Delhi has been preparing younger, new political actors, most of who have been vetted by Shah to replace the old leadership. Prime Minister Modi praised the Block Development Council (BDC) elections as a democratic exercise though it was anything but that. Elections were held before October 31 under the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act and not the Indian Panchayat Act, so that polls could be indirect and "managed." Elected Panches and

Sarpanches selected one among them as the head of the block councils. Many of the elected Panches were confined to hotels in Srinagar, removed from their regions. The elections were farcical as 60 per cent of the Panches and Sarpanches' seats were vacant and winners were elected unopposed.

All political leaders, except the BJP, were in detention. Still, it was the Independents who won the maximum seats. The aim is to create a political class owing allegiance to New Delhi, preferably from Jammu. With the Legislative Council abolished, Legislative Assembly seats have been increased effectively from 83 to 90, excluding 24 for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. It is still not clear as to who will do the delimitation: The Election Commission of India or a delimitation panel. Any tinkering with the demography will be outright dangerous.

The new Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, GC Murmu, has said that elections will be held soon. Managing Srinagar by remote control from New Delhi will not be easy given the decades of trauma generations of Kashmiris have suffered. A 11-member team, comprising mental health specialists, which visited Kashmir after scrapping of the special status, reported "marked increase in psychological distress

in the region." A report titled, *Imprisoned Resistance: 5th August and its aftermath*, was released in New Delhi last week. No meaningful political outreach will be feasible when Kashmiris are stripped off their identity. Their hearts and minds, won over the years by the Army, are now largely lost.

Three security issues will continue to cross-fertilise: Existing alienation, which has turned into resentment; mounting radicalisation and Islamisation; and home-grown and cross-border terrorism dormant at present due to the lockdown. Kashmiris are less angry about deprivation of the special status than their land being downgraded to a Union Territory. The insult to their identity is palpable and will remain even when statehood is restored. The largely spontaneous civil disobedience movement will breed more radicalised youth, who will take to street violence and join the ranks of insurgency. The contours of a new insurgency will likely appear by next summer. Unlike in the past, Kashmiris will more readily support insurgents than the security forces.

In the short-term, once the passes close and snow sets in the hinterland by the end of November, insurgents will be forced to take refuge in villages and towns. The pause in secu-

city forces' operations due to the lockdown has undermined the counter-insurgency and intelligence grids considerably.

Troop density in the Valley is at the highest levels since "Operation Parakram" (2001-02) when nearly 2,000 terrorists were killed. Pakistan will remain constrained due to the fear of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which will review its actions in blocking terrorist financing in February 2020. Pakistan has not launched a single big attack after Pulwama, in fact, after Mumbai. But the 250-300 terrorists in the Valley, radicalised youth and overground workers will keep the security forces busy for long. Disaffected Kashmiris are hurt when Modi brags at home and abroad about having abrogated their special status while chasing the mirage of turning Kashmir into a land of milk and honey. "We have tried other ways and failed... so let's give abrogation of Article 370 a chance", is the contention.

Emotional integration of Kashmir has been put off even as North-eastern States, enjoying special status, are getting restive. Shah must get real.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander IPKF South, Sri Lanka and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff.)

SOUNDBITE

This is now a fight for the dignity and self-respect of Maharashtra. Now, even if we are offered the throne of (Lord) Indra, we are not interested.



Sena MP —Sanjay Raut

The truth is that no discussion about the Indian-Afghan relationship would be complete without a mention of Bollywood and cricket.



Afghan Ambassador to the US —Roya Rahmani

India faces many regional and geopolitical threats. Islamic insurgents are a constant threat, spreading terror throughout J&K and elsewhere in India.



Congressman —Francis Rooney

We hope Pakistanis will ask the Chinese Government why it is pursuing a development model in Pakistan that deviates from what brought it its own economic success.



Top American diplomat —Alice Wells

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Deeper malaise

Sir — Amid vigorous efforts to tackle non-performing assets (NPAs), the revelation of ₹95,760 crore being ripped off from Government banks in April-September reflects deep systemic disorder. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) was rolled out to sort things out but none factored in the time-frame of resolution, thus making the entire process ineffective. The focus of every segment of governance is on being seen to be doing something rather than on when, how and in what time-frame.

R Narayanan
Mumbai

Clear the air

Sir — The Supreme Court's decision on the ambit of the RTI Act will serve as a precedent to usher in greater transparency, especially on the part of organisations that have hitherto been reluctant to comply with the Act, such as the Board of Control for Cricket in India and Mother Dairy. This judgment contradicts the opinion of former Chief Justice of India

(CJI), KG Balakrishnan, who was opposed to the Delhi High Court's ruling, which has now been upheld.

However, even now, important points like the criteria for the nomination of judges have been excluded from the purview of the RTI Act. Such an exclusion could defeat the entire purpose of the verdict. The names of donors, who purchase electoral bonds to

fund political parties, should also be made available to the public upon enquiry. The BJP uses plenty of anti-corruption rhetoric but information about its own funding sources remains concealed. As of now, the operation of Constitutional agencies still remains mostly opaque, whereas it should be transparent.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee
Faridabad

All is not lost for the telecom industry

This refers to the editorial, "Turmoil in telecom" (November 21). The telecom industry is turning out to be another aviation business because of the kind of returns it is giving. Vodafone-Idea's spectrum dues to the Government reached ₹88,000 crore and those of Bharti Airtel stood at ₹45,000 crore. However, it's not just the Indian telecom that is witnessing a decline. This trend is to be seen worldwide as growth rates have taken a setback in the face of declining average revenue.

The two-year moratorium given by the Government will bring partial reprieve. Unless return on capital employed for global telecom services is raised, this industry cannot revive. Higher operating costs have squeezed margins for telcos. And while Vodafone has threatened to leave the Indian market, if indeed it were to shut shop, the biggest sufferers could be the consumers as this would lead to the duopoly of Reliance and Airtel. There could be a possibility that these two firms may take end users for granted, knowing it well that competition is



all but over, with little incentive or pressure to reduce prices. It is, therefore, essential that the Government offers them incentives to induct newer technologies so as to make the shift to 5G technology at the earliest, invest more in R&D and better customer experience.

Bal Govind
Noida

bodies like the World Trade Organisation (WTO), BRICS and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), an IFS officer's career is much more exciting now. The External Affairs Ministry has not expanded much by establishing more embassies and consulates and, hence, the number of candidates designated for the IFS has hardly gone up.

Varun Dambal
Bengaluru

Take lessons

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Breathing new life" (November 22). All the five public sector undertakings (PSUs), which have been put on strategic sale by the Government, had been performing quite well. Some were even role models for private firms. The Government should have taken corrective steps when they started registering losses. Even now, a comprehensive examination must be done to find out the causes for their debacle.

Rati
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Reap the AI benefit

Soon job seekers will be sifted by algorithms and exercises that test problem-solving skills, creativity and how people respond to stress



KUNAL GUPTA

For years, the biggest challenge in the recruiting industry was manually testing applicants. Now, thankfully, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a reality and its use for recruitment is rapidly evolving. Soon, the days of reading endless resumes and covering letters, then holding interviews, will give way to AI-led candidate assessment. Job seekers will be sifted by algorithms and exercises that test everything, from problem-solving skills and creativity, to how they respond to stress. AI will enable Human Resource (HR) professionals to reach the right candidate in the least possible time, with low-cost inclusion.

According to a recent study, 52 per cent of talent acquisition leaders say the hardest part of recruitment is identifying the right candidates from a large applicant pool. While, 56 per cent say their hiring volume will increase this year, 66 per cent of recruiting teams will either stay the same size or contract. This means that recruiters are being tasked to do more with lesser resources.

Business leaders looking to hire or HR managers should consider fast-rising employment solutions that provide AI-enhanced recruitment. It is crucial for any company to not merely hire employees but recruit the most qualified person.

In today's business climate, firms with first-mover advantage usually lead the way and soon, talent acquisition in India will undergo a paradigm shift. So, to keep up with advancements in the industry, HR professionals should become part of the AI revolution as the benefits of doing so are many. AI-enhanced HR solutions are becoming the backbone of the industry, especially for companies that need to recruit thousands of employees in a short time.

A recruitment system based on AI is capable of screening candidates in a more systematic way while looking out for a particular skill set, without any human intervention. It has algorithmic power to conclude the performance of job applicants.

It can even track online interviews on a real time basis and if an applicant faces difficulties in a particular sphere, then the AI will ask similar questions, repeatedly, to gauge how the candidate reacts to pressure. The only thing left for the recruiter is to provide the AI with a database to work on and to check the final list of the candidates before the recruitment system sends out emails for an interview. AI recruiting systems are designed to tremendously improve the recruiter's efficiency to ensure that companies don't miss the best candidates and they are the first ones to be selected for the interview.

Today's business leaders are always looking for people who perfectly fit the skill set they are looking for and there is tremendous pressure on recruiters to match and hire the candidates who can meet the management's expectations. AI-optimised hiring helps recruiters match the right employees with the right company. Plus, the AI recruitment software delivers solutions at a low cost so that it reduces a firm's cost per hire. Companies have to invest in the AI system once unlike the recurring costs of recruitment agencies that charge firms per employee hired.

However, there are many challenges to leveraging AI's full potential. First is competence, as the AI ecosystem, like its most important subfield, machine learning (ML), is still very small. It's difficult to find and hire good talent. Any challenge in the world and especially in business, is an opportunity for AI. Adopting AI will require patience and a willingness to learn and will be complex and lengthy, so firms need to start now. Between the ongoing development of AI to recruit applicants and the understandable lag in implementation at this early stage, many of the features that it can bring to the hiring process are still to be completely implemented.

Like every new computing technology, AI still has a long way to go and there are some serious concerns which need to be addressed. As is obvious, AI has been invented to replace the human workforce and if it is adopted on a large scale, this will result in huge unemployment. There is no doubt that adopting AI will enhance the work culture and productivity, but it will also create economic imbalance in most sectors.

The second big concern is privacy, as we have seen various AI-infused web platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp lacking in this sphere. So along with adopting AI, organisations should equally give importance to the protection of the privacy of their staff and prospective employees.

To conclude, AI is a very new and unexplored segment and it will require major infrastructure to educate people about it before we let it come into our lives in a major way.

(The writer is MD of a talent consulting firm.)

MODI HASN'T BEEN ABLE TO FORGIVE PRAGYA FROM THE HEART BUT SHE HAS BEEN GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY ON IMPORTANT ISSUES SUCH AS INDIA'S DEFENCE.

—CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON
RANDEEP SURJEWALA

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THE CONGRESS SEEMS TO HAVE LOST ITS FAITH IN DEMOCRACY AND FORGOTTEN THAT PRAGYA THAKUR IS AN ELECTED MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

—BJP MP
MEENAKSHI LEKHI

Too little and a little too late

The Govt has put a moratorium on pending spectrum payments for telecoms without altering the overall timeline of clearing all dues by 2030-31. But, given the huge amount to be paid, this won't be of much help



UTTAM GUPTA

Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL) — a joint venture between UK-based Vodafone and KM Birla-owned Idea Cellular — and Bharti Airtel have reported a staggering loss of ₹51,000 crore and ₹23,000 crore respectively for the second quarter of the current financial year ending September 30, 2019. This is primarily due to a recent order of the Supreme Court (SC) directing telecom companies to give "unpaid" dues towards licence fee and spectrum usage charges (SUC).

The order is the culmination of a long-drawn court battle between the Department of Telecommunication (DoT) and service providers. While the former insisted that for determining the licence fee and SUC — which is charged as a percentage of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) (at eight per cent and three-five per cent respectively), apart from telecom services revenue — AGR should also include revenue from non-telecom services viz. rent, profit on sale of fixed assets, dividend, interest and so on, the latter opposed it. The SC upheld the DoT's view.

As a result, service providers will now have to pay excess of the amount calculated on the basis of total revenue i.e. from telecom services plus non-telecom activities over the amount already paid based on revenue from telecom services only. Together with interest on excess amount, plus penalty, interest on penalty, this would be ₹53,000 crore for VIL and ₹36,000 crore for Airtel.

However, with a view to avert the crisis for the telecoms, the Government has put a moratorium on pending spectrum payments during 2020-21 and 2021-22 (without altering the overall timeline of clearing all payments by 2030-31). But, considering the magnitude of the unpaid dues (as per the SC's order), this won't be of much help. For instance, in case of VIL, against total liability of ₹53,000 crore, the relief from suspension of spectrum payments is only ₹24,000 crore. In the case of Airtel, the quantum of relief works out to ₹11,000 crore against a liability of ₹36,000 crore. The Government has also alluded to exonerating them from payment of interest and penalty on dues as per the apex court's order but that is no consolation as this would be available only when the SC allows it, which is unlikely.

So, the three big firms are staring at a bleak future. Vodafone has opined that "the future of the Indian JV is in doubt and we won't be infusing any further equity into the venture." The Birla Group too, has echoed similar views, hinting that the company could be taken to insolvency. Bharti Airtel, too, is on the brink.

VIL has a customer base of 320 million whereas Bharti Airtel has 265 million. At 585 million, they account for nearly 50 per cent of the total subscribers in India. If, these two companies go into liquidation, this could have catastrophic implications, not just for banks who have an exposure of over ₹200,000 crore to the duo, but also for subscribers, who would be left high and dry.

They are looking to the Government for relief by way of reduction in licence fee and SUC, reduction in Goods and Services Tax (GST) from the existing 18 per cent to five per cent and so on. Even as the Government considers this, it needs to ascertain as to how the sector landed in the current morass.

In September 2016, in a bizarre move rarely seen before, greenfield 4G operator Reliance Jio

AT THE CORE OF THE TELECOM CRISIS IS THE FREEBIES CULT, WHICH RJIO HAS IMPLANTED AND WAS GLOSSED OVER BY THE POWERS THAT BE. THERE IS URGENT NEED TO GET RID OF IT. THE INITIATIVE HAS TO COME FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS ONLY. EVEN AS VIL AND AIRTEL HAVE DECIDED TO RAISE TARIFF, RJIO'S INTENT TO FOLLOW SUIT IS A GOOD SIGN. TRAI MUST NOT ABDICATE ITS RESPONSIBILITY. IT SHOULD PROMPTLY ORDER A 'FLOOR PRICE' AND ENSURE THAT NO OPERATOR SETS TARIFF BELOW IT



(RJio) entered the Indian telecom market with "free" and "unlimited" voice calls and low-cost data. After launching an introductory offer for free — both data and voice for six months, from April, 2017, it charged data at a throwaway price of ₹50 per GB, even as voice calls continued to be free ad infinitum. For a conglomerate (RJio) investing thousands of crores in laying infrastructure, an attempt to sell services virtually for free was a brazen case of "predatory" pricing with the sole intent to snatch customers from incumbent players. The latter were forced to reduce their tariff drastically to match the former. Post-revision, the tariff in India at less than \$1 per GB is a fraction of what customers in other countries pay (\$30 in Japan; \$18 in Korea; \$15 in UK, China and Germany and \$10 in the USA).

As a result, incumbent operators, who were making profits prior to RJio's entry, are incurring losses. Several operators downed shutters while others were bought over (e.g. Tata Teleservices was acquired by Bharti Airtel). Today, there are only three private operators viz. VIL, RJio and Airtel, down from a dozen earlier. When, predatory pricing happens, it is for the sector regulator, in this instance the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), to intervene. The TRAI should have nipped the problem in the bud. But it saw nothing wrong and adding insult to injury, in February 2018, it came out with fresh amendments to the Telecom Tariff Order (TTO) to define predatory pricing in a manner so as to give legitimacy to the actions of RJio.

As per the amended order, a tariff is considered predatory if in a relevant market (circle), an operator, who is a significant market player (SMP), offers services at a price that is below its average variable cost (AVC) with a view to reduce competition or eliminate competitors in that relevant market. An operator will be

considered SMP if "it controls 30 per cent of the market share or above," which is calculated on the basis of gross revenue and subscriber market share. Further, AVC is defined as the cost that is calculated by identifying those expenses, which change with output, adding them and then dividing the result with total number of units produced.

Simply put, the regulator prescribed a two-fold criterion for a firm to be a predator. First, it offers services at less than AVC. Second it has market share over 30 per cent. During the relevant period, 2016-18, even as all firms were selling below the AVC, incumbent operators had market share more than 30 per cent (natural as they have been around for over two decades) whereas, RJio had share of less than 30 per cent. So, in the eyes of the regulator, the former were predators even as the latter was not. In other words, a company which started it all (RJio) was termed innocent even as others who suffered due to its onslaught were charged with indulging in predatory pricing and scuttling competition.

The amended order was "one-sided" and "discriminatory," aimed at favouring RJio and unfairly targeting incumbent players. The order was challenged before the Telecom Disputes Settlement Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT), which set aside TRAI's order and even observed that it was "non-transparent." However, by the time TDSAT pronounced its verdict on December 13, 2018, the damage was already done.

Other actions of the TRAI, such as a steep cut in the Interconnect Usage Charge (IUC) (it is a charge the telecom service provider of a caller pays to the telco on whose network the call terminates) in September 2017 from the existing 14 paise per minute to six paise per minute also impacted the incumbent operators. This drastically reduced their revenue from IUC even as RJio was increasing its market share by leaps and

bounds (courtesy, free voice calls).

TRAI has also prescribed adopting the "Bill and Keep" (BAK) regime from January 1, 2020, thereby reducing the IUC to zero. This will give a further jolt to the incumbent operators. The only reason (unsaid) behind the powers that be letting RJio continue with its bizarre practice may have something to do with Modi's grandiose plans for pan-India broadband connectivity. Low tariff (even free voice call) which RJio had promised, helped increase coverage, especially for a majority of the poor. But, what it ignores is that public interest is not served merely by keeping price low/free. Providing services on a "sustainable" basis and maintaining "quality" is no less important.

This won't be possible if, service providers are in dire financial straits. To some extent, incumbent operators are themselves to blame. For instance, they ought to have factored in a negative outcome of court proceedings (these have gone on for over a decade) and made contingency provisions in their books. They have also lagged behind in embracing new technologies (they are still glued to 2G/3G) even as RJio has latched on to 4G. But, at the core of the crisis is the freebies cult, which RJio has implanted and was glossed over by the powers that be. There is urgent need to get rid of this cult.

The initiative has to come from service providers only. Even as VIL and Airtel have decided to raise tariff, RJio's intent to follow suit is a good sign. TRAI must not abdicate its responsibility. It should promptly order a "floor price" and ensure that no operator sets tariff below it. It should watch out for an act of predation and deal with it sternly.

However, there is no getting away from the fact that the service providers have to set their house in order.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst.)

Is judicial action divorced from public interest?

In Goa, livelihoods of 300,000 people associated with the mining industry disappeared overnight after judicial intervention. This is painful, particularly when the country is going through the worst employment crisis and has no alternative



ABHAY RAJ MISHRA

The recent Supreme Court (SC) verdict on Ayodhya has again established that law cannot be detached from the interests of the people it serves. There is a raging debate whether the judgment was based on credible evidence or influenced by the faith of the majority. Irrespective, the ruling has been accepted by all factions, not necessarily for its veracity but for bringing to an end a painful impasse. What is undebatable is that it has brought peace to the nation.

This ethos of acting in public interest must now be extended to end pain in other areas as well. Take the case of Goa, the only State where mining rights were granted to citizens by the Portuguese Government in perpetuity. These rights were later revoked by the Centre and now, lakhs of Goans

are staring at a major employment crisis. Over 300,000 people are dependent on mining in the State and they have become the face of massive livelihood loss triggered by judicial intervention. Ever since the SC cancelled 88 mining leases in Goa on February 7, 2018, life has come to a grinding, tragic halt for these workers and their families.

This is no longer just an economic crisis — which is severely debilitating in its own right — but a grave humanitarian crisis as well.

Livelihoods disappearing overnight as a result of judicial intervention, because the Executive and the corporate masters did not do their jobs properly, is painful particularly at a time when the country is going through the worst employment crisis in its history. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), unemployment in 2017-2018 was at a four-decade high of 6.1 per cent. New job seekers are not able to find sustainable employment and August 2019 saw the highest rate of unemployment in India at 8.4 per cent.

The most recent example of mass job losses as a result of the collapse of

a big organisation is Jet Airways. Due to poor management of funds, the founder himself led one of India's best airlines into bankruptcy and closure. However, employees of the airline were aware of the unfolding situation and had braced themselves for the layoffs. But in the case of Goa, the miners and other workers were unprepared.

This, when there was no financial crisis in the mining sector. Rather it was booming, with iron ore being an exportable produce of the State.

Goa could have generated three times more revenue from iron ore mining but has not only lost this opportunity but is dealing with the extensive collateral damage that has followed the cancellation of the leases. The ban has taken a toll on the State's revenue stream and its social fabric has been ripped apart. Not just the mining sector but all other stakeholders and the supportive infrastructure, comprising equipment suppliers, the logistics and ancillary industry and the transport sector, have floundered.

Goa is the only State with a unique logistical arrangement for

movement of iron ore from the mines to the ports, unlike other States which rely on Indian Railways for the same. Iron ore is carried by trucks and barges from the mines to the ports.

The ban on mining has resulted in unemployment for workers hired by 12,000 truck owners, 150 barge owners and 150 ancillary units and has spelled doom for them. Not only have they suffered from livelihood loss, there is a larger crisis looming as the families have near about exhausted their meagre savings and have been subsisting on loans and handouts from well-wishers.

Even banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) in the State have been drawn into the slide. When the going was good, these institutions eagerly extended credit lines to the truckers and storage providers. Now, in the absence of a running business concern, the ability of people to repay has vanished and a huge Non-Performing Asset (NPA) crisis is looming in the State.

Added to this is the loan and money-recovery trauma being faced by those dependent on the mining sec-

tor and the burgeoning tragedy begins to hit uncomfortably home.

In any economic ecosystem, one segment aids and benefits from the other. The interdependency, which the Goan mining industry had so healthily created with respect to the State's other revenue driver, internal tourism and food industry, is also hit as people don't have the money to spend anymore. As individual economies of families waste away and die, the State is suffering from a socio-economic disaster. It is imperative that mining restarts to provide livelihoods in the mining sector and ancillary industries to lakhs of people of the State.

There is enough research available to indicate a direct link between crime and lack of livelihood. Studies have established that India's Maoist movement is deeply rooted in the poor socio-economic conditions prevalent in parts of the country with large tribal populations. It has mostly affected areas where there is a conflict between the State and the populace on the economic derivation of forest produce and mining such as in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, and agriculture in parts of

Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Such aggressive posturing by citizens has huge direct and indirect costs. In Goa there were only two major sources of livelihood — mining and tourism. Without these, Goa has nothing. Any social unrest and spikes in crime rate can spell doom for Goa's tourism economy too, which so far has been characterised by friendly service by the Goans, discipline, cleanliness and law and order.

Laws are meant to create a conducive environment for the citizens of the State. Goa, however, has become a case where the law and its interpretation has spelled doom for its residents. This cannot become a precedent and must be addressed immediately. Situations like these need more complex solutions. It is simplistic to penalise lakhs of people for the actions of a few with the stroke of a pen. Stakeholders must come together to rescue these lives and livelihoods before it is too late.

(The writer is president of a Delhi-based not-for-profit organisation dedicated towards finding solutions to the problems of the helpless.)

FOREIGN EYE



DON'T EXTRADITE ASSANGE TO USA

Sweden's decision to drop an investigation into a rape allegation against Julian Assange has illuminated the situation of the WikiLeaks founder and made it more pressing. He must be defended against extradition to America in a case that digs at the foundations of freedom and democracy and could see him sentenced to a total of 175 years. It is a matter of Press freedom, and the public's right to know. It's unclear if it would be safe to extradite Assange to the US. It is certain that it would not be right.

(The Guardian editorial)

Markets extend losses as IT, bank stocks skid

PTI ■ MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

Equity benchmarks treaded lower for the second straight day on Friday, weighed by losses in IT and bank stocks, as investors balked at expanding their portfolios amid stretched valuations and growth concerns. After trading on a weak note through the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 215.76 points, or 0.53 per cent, lower at 40,359.41.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty settled 54 points, or 0.45 per cent, down at 11,914.40. During the week, the Sensex inched up 2.72 points, while the Nifty gained 18.95 points.

Infosys was the top loser in the Sensex pack on Friday, dropping 2.89 per cent, followed by TCS, Asian Paints, Bharti Airtel and HCL Tech.

IT stocks came under selling pressure following reports of changes in US work visa requirements aimed at protecting American workers, traders said.

On the other hand, Tata Steel gained 3.74 per cent, NTPC 2.35 per cent, Vedanta 2.27 per cent and ONGC 2.18 per cent.

"Market is on an edge given high valuations for blue-chips, not providing a head-

'Lack of new trigger in the coming week and focus being on India's weak GDP data to be announced next week, is impacting the market.'

room for main indices to move higher trading at P/E of 26x on trailing basis. Lack of new trigger in the coming week and focus being on India's weak GDP data to be announced next week, is impacting the market.

"RBI's interpretation of this data and possible change in stance from the current accommodative monetary policy to neutral may hurt the rally. Fresh concerns over stringent norms for US H1-B visa dragged IT heavyweights," said Vinod Nair, head of research, Geojit Financial Services.

Sectorally, BSE IT, tech, telecom, capital goods, bank, industrials and consumer durables fell up to 2.21 per cent.

On the other hand, metal, power, utilities, basic materials,

energy and auto gained up to 2.08 per cent.

Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices fell up to 0.14 per cent.

On the global front, equities ticked higher even as the US-China trade tensions remained an overhang.

In Asia, bourses in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul settled in the green, while Shanghai finished with losses.

European equities were also trading on a positive note in their respective early deals.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, dipped 0.03 per cent to USD 63.95 per barrel.

RUPEE UP 5 PAISE

Meanwhile, the Indian rupee settled 5 paise higher at 71.71 against the US dollar on Friday, marking its second straight session of gains.

Forex traders said the domestic currency traded in a narrow range amid lack of cues on the domestic front.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened stronger at 71.77 against the US dollar. During the day, the domestic unit fluctuated between a high of 71.70 and a low of 71.87.

The rupee finally settled at 71.71, up 5 paise over its previous close.

Leather exporters penetrate new markets to boost shipments

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leather exporters from India have penetrated new markets such as the US, Canada, Russia, Japan, Australia, and South Korea to tap increasing demands in these countries and boost the country's overall exports, CLE said on Friday.

Council for Leather Exports Chairman PR Aqeel Ahmed said that they had organised Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet here to showcase products to global companies.

"Besides the traditional market of Europe, the industry has penetrated many potential markets like USA, Canada, Russia, Japan, UAE, Korea, and Australia," he said in a statement.

Ahmed said the CLE had been undertaking several export promotion events in both Europe and other major and potential markets to expand market share.

"During 2019-20, we are organising 16 such marketing events and have planned 25 marketing events during 2020-21," he said adding that in the Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet here, as many as 55 overseas buyers from 26 countries participated.

Such events provide platform to Indian exporters particularly those in the small and medium segments to meet overseas buyers without having to travel abroad, he added.

Appliances and consumer electronics industry expected to double to ₹1.48L crore by FY25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The appliances and consumer electronics industry is projected to double to ₹1.48 lakh crore by 2024-25, according to a report.

The market is expected to see acceleration in growth on account of surging rural consumption, reducing replacement cycles, increasing penetration of retail, a wide choice of brands and products at various price points, it added.

The industry had a total market size of ₹76,400 crore in 2018-19, in which ₹32,200 crore was contributed from domestic manufacturing, according to the joint report by CEAMA and Frost & Sullivan.

The report is based on product categories, which include air-conditioners, refrig-

erators, washing machines, television (TV) and audio.

"The overall market size of the five categories covered in this project for the year FY19 is ₹76,400 crore and the market is estimated to grow at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 11.7 per cent till FY25," the report said. It also suggests that domestic value addition for "ACE (appliances and consumer electronics) products under scope stands at 34 per cent in FY19 and is likely to grow to 54 per cent by FY25."

The report expects the air-conditioning (AC) market size to grow to 165 lakh units in 2018-19, from 65 lakh units in 2014-15, while refrigerator to grow to 275 lakh units as compared with 145 lakh units in 2018-19.

The TV market is expected

to grow to 284 lakh units in 2024-25 from 175 lakh units in 2018-19 and washing machines to be at 126 lakh units from 70 lakh units of 2018-19.

Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association president Kamal Nandi said domestic manufacturing was increasing and companies had invested around ₹7,000 crore in past few years.

However, he also added that the sector is still facing challenges in the form of logistics, finance cost and lacks a proper ecosystem. "Free-trade agreements are also becoming an issue to the ACE industry," said Nandi.

He also requested the government to reduce goods and services tax on ACs as well as on TV panels above 32 inch and bring them under 18 per cent

bracket. He also said that the ACE industry, which is focusing on domestic manufacturing, would help the government achieve its goal to be a USD 5-trillion economy by 2024.

The report said for refrigerator, local manufacturing adds up to 55 per cent of the total market size. In washing machine, it has witnessed strong local manufacturing and adds up to 75 per cent of the total market size.

In audio, domestic manufacturing is only 22 per cent. "In FDP TV, open cells and the chips of TVs are predominantly imported from Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan and China. The government has removed import duty on open cell panel used in production of TV sets, a move which would lower the cost," the report said.

Investments via P-notes rise in October

New Delhi (PTI): After declining for four consecutive months, investments through participatory notes (P-notes) in the Indian capital market marginally rose to ₹76,773 crore at the end of October. P-notes are issued by registered foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to overseas investors who wish to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly after going through a due diligence process.

Before registering gain in October, investments through P-notes had been declining continuously since June, according to the latest data from markets regulator Sebi.

The total value of investments via P-notes in the Indian markets (including equity, debt, and derivatives) rose to ₹76,773 crore till the end of October from ₹76,611 crore at September-end.

At the end of August, the Indian capital market saw a total inflow of ₹79,088 crore through P-notes, a drop from ₹81,082 crore till July-end. The investment

had stood at ₹81,913 crore at June-end and ₹82,619 crore at the end of May.

Of the total investments made till the end of October, ₹52,753 crore was invested in the equities, ₹23,316 crore in debt and ₹704 crore in the derivatives segments.

In July, the board of Sebi had approved a proposal to rationalise the framework for issuance of P-notes. The use of P-notes has been on a decline since 2017 and slumped to a nine-and-a-half year low of ₹66,587 crore at the end of October last year.

NIFTY 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY 50	11967.30	11968.10	11883.50	11914.40	-54.00
TATASTEEL	386.00	402.80	383.10	401.35	16.25
EICHERMOT	21766.30	22965.00	21600.00	22850.00	895.40
ZEE	344.00	362.80	334.60	355.95	10.80
NTPC	116.95	119.20	116.95	118.20	2.90
JSWSTEEL	245.00	253.00	244.30	251.30	6.05
VEDL	139.00	142.85	138.70	142.10	3.05
ONGC	131.00	134.65	130.80	133.70	2.55
GRASIM	778.40	796.90	770.25	792.10	13.15
POWERGRID	196.00	201.20	196.00	199.20	2.70
HDFC	2203.00	2240.00	2199.30	2240.00	29.65
YESBANK	64.25	66.15	64.00	64.95	0.70
COALINDIA	196.95	199.35	196.30	198.70	2.10
SUNPHARMA	450.00	461.90	445.10	458.00	3.65
IOC	128.65	130.40	128.35	129.85	0.95
ITC	247.15	252.65	246.65	247.50	1.80
RELIANCE	1542.10	1569.50	1537.60	1548.05	10.45
MARUTI	7034.00	7077.45	7000.00	7065.00	45.95
HINDALCO	188.00	191.30	187.05	189.50	0.90
BAJAJFINSV	9059.80	9080.00	8981.00	9074.00	18.90
INDUSINDBK	1449.95	1460.80	1437.00	1448.95	2.80
GAIL	122.00	122.65	121.05	122.10	0.15
ICICIBANK	501.10	501.75	492.15	497.65	-0.60
ULTRACEMCO	4084.80	4097.85	4030.00	4070.05	-7.20
NESTLEIND	14190.00	14300.95	14102.00	14150.00	-29.45
HEROMOTOCO	2449.95	2458.40	2426.00	2436.00	-7.45
ADANIPOWER	372.25	375.55	370.45	371.00	-1.10
SBIN	331.45	333.80	328.25	329.35	-2.00
DREDDY	2855.00	2904.75	2843.00	2858.05	-21.20
HINDUNILVR	2050.00	2053.20	2008.00	2030.80	-17.85
AXISBANK	737.40	740.00	727.50	730.60	-6.80
BAJFINANCE	4130.00	4143.80	4041.00	4080.00	-43.65
BPL	513.80	515.45	505.50	508.60	-5.50
L1	1393.75	1398.95	1371.00	1377.80	-14.90
M&M	554.75	555.00	539.20	545.85	-5.95
TITAN	1148.00	1150.70	1123.20	1135.05	-13.20
TATAMOTORS	164.00	165.25	160.55	162.25	-1.80
BAJAJ-AUTO	3180.00	3186.00	3133.50	3150.00	-38.35
HDFCBANK	1283.65	1283.65	1262.00	1266.50	-16.85
CIPLA	485.00	485.00	472.00	478.65	-6.85
BRITANNIA	3062.25	3072.00	3016.15	3025.00	-47.65
TECHM	765.00	765.00	742.80	753.10	-12.05
KOTAKBANK	159.95	159.90	156.50	156.90	-26.35
HCLTECH	1131.45	1134.95	1108.95	1117.50	-19.10
WIPRO	243.30	245.65	242.10	243.05	-4.50
BHARTIARTL	423.00	429.95	417.00	418.35	-7.95
UPL	541.00	542.50	530.50	533.30	-11.50
ASIANPAINT	1710.00	1713.95	1676.00	1682.80	-37.55
TCS	2097.00	2107.00	2060.50	2067.10	-51.00
INFY	711.75	712.00	685.10	692.95	-20.30
INFRADEL	242.00	243.00	227.40	232.05	-9.85

NIFTY NEXT 50

SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE
NIFTY NEXT 50	28157.70	28177.65	27972.15	28059.20	-73.40
MOTHERSUMI	124.00	129.25	124.00	127.00	4.70
BOSCHLTD	15800.00	16400.00	15211.25	16379.50	597.00
PIIC	114.60	118.80	114.10	118.15	3.25
SRLIFE	931.00	945.75	931.00	943.90	14.30
IBULHSGFIN	236.50	244.90	231.40	234.55	3.00
HINDPETRO	284.95	291.60	283.80	290.40	3.60
SRTRANSFIN	1128.90	1146.85	1120.50	1143.00	14.15
L&T	96.00	96.95	94.30	96.90	1.00
DMART	1824.80	1840.00	1817.00	1837.20	18.45
NMDC	99.60	100.80	98.45	100.70	1.50
DLF	216.95	219.35	214.25	218.35	1.50
BIOCOC	25.50	25.825	25.250	25.65	1.70
NHPC	23.40	23.70	23.35	23.55	0.15
PNB	63.20	64.70	63.20	63.65	0.40
BANKBARODA	99.00	99.80	98.40	99.10	0.50
SHREECAM	2030.00	2040.00	2020.65	2033.15	40.45
MARICO	35.20	35.90	35.70	35.70	0.65
MCDOWELL-N	61.25	61.90	60.90	61.60	1.00
PEL	1766.00	1784.45	1750.10	1767.00	2.60
LUPIN	775.20	781.95	767.20	771.90	0.90
BAJAJHLING	3676.00	3735.00	3676.00	3692.00	4.20
PIDILITIND	1303.00	1316.45	1288.45	1298.40	-1.35
DABUR	464.10	464.90	457.00	463.80	-0.45
ACC	1473.00	1482.65	1462.20	1470.00	-3.35
INDIGO	1392.00	1404.90	1357.25	1397.00	-3.20
AUROPHARMA	432.10	449.70	421.50	428.50	-1.20
ICICIRULI	501.90	501.90	493.60	498.00	-1.55
HDFCLIFE	591.80	593.90	581.25	585.75	-3.50
UPL	1230.90	1235.50	1217.95	1220.00	-7.30
DIVISLAB	1745.00	1748.00	1717.35	1736.00	-11.05
COLPAL	1515.00	1517.60	1480.05	1502.30	-9.75
AMBUJACEM	200.70	202.20	198.10	199.70	-1.35
HINDZINC	214.70	217.50	210.00	212.90	-1.80
CADILHAC	254.35	256.35	247.55	251.80	-2.60
ASHOKLEY	82.45	82.75	80.70	81.65	-0.85
BERGEPAINT	480.00	482.95	472.00	476.00	-5.55
PAGEIND	2230.00	2250.00	2172.50	2190.00	-280.20
ICIGI	1374.55	1384.00	1331.00	1356.00	-18.10
PGHFI	10925.00	10980.00	10760.00	10781.00	-144.15
IDEA	6.60	6.95	6.05	6.55	-0.10
OFSS	2979.60	2988.35	2905.90	2918.00	-47.20
BANDHANBANK	535.15	538.00	523.50	525.25	-8.70
NIACL	154.45	155.00	149.50	150.60	-2.90
HDFCAMC	378.50	384.00	368.15	369.00	-75.75
GODREJCP	728.70	728.70	709.00	711.00	-15.30
HAVELLS	650.00	653.30	636.00	637.55	-16.15
CONCOR	575.15	575.80	554.25	559.80	-17.35
PETRONET	271.00	273.25	263.60	264.30	-8.30
SIEMENS	1543.20	1544.00	1470.30	1494.60	-48.55
GICRE	267.00	274.50	255.60	259.00	-10.10

BSE 500

Script

California court invalidates law requiring Trump tax returns

AP ■ LOS ANGELES

President Donald Trump does not have to disclose his tax returns to appear as a candidate on California's primary ballot next spring, the state Supreme Court ruled unanimously Thursday.

The law, the first of its kind in the nation and aimed squarely at Trump, violates a specification of the state constitution calling for an "inclusive open presidential primary ballot," the court said.

"Ultimately, it is the voters who must decide whether the refusal of a recognized candidate throughout the nation or throughout California for the office of President of the United States to make such information available to the public will have consequences at the ballot box," Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye wrote in the 7-0 decision.

Trump has broken with tradition among presidential candidates by refusing to dis-

close his financial information.

A US judge had temporarily blocked the state law in response to a different lawsuit, and the high court ruled quickly because the deadline to file tax returns to get on the primary ballot is next week.

The state Republican Party and chairwoman Jessica Millan Patterson challenged the bill signed into law this year by Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom because it singled out Trump.

"Today's ruling is a victory for every California voter," Patterson said in a statement. "We are pleased that the courts saw through the Democrats' petty partisan maneuvers and saw this law for what it is — an unconstitutional attempt to suppress Republican voter turnout."

The state defended the law, saying release of tax returns gave voters important information to weigh candidates' financial status.

Sen. Mike McGuire, a Democrat who authored the bill, said it was a simple requirement for candidates to meet and provided accountability.

"Today's decision flies in the face of what the American people have come to expect from presidential candidates — transparency," McGuire said. "Every presidential candidate for the past 40 years has released their tax returns, with the exception of the current occupant of the White House. If he has nothing to hide, why wouldn't he release them?"

The law would have required candidates for president or governor to file copies of personal income tax returns dating back five years. Refusal to do so would keep them off the state's primary ballot, but not apply to general elections.

The ruling does not apply to the requirement for gubernatorial candidates, Newsom spokesman Jesse Melgar said. "Governments have a



File photo: California Gov. Gavin Newsom.

moral duty to restore public confidence in government and ensure leaders seeking the highest offices meet minimal standards," Melgar said in a statement. "Congress and other

states can and should take action to require presidential candidates to disclose their tax returns."

California is the only state to pass such a bill, but the issue

was before lawmakers in 20 states this year, said Wendy Underhill of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

While bills in 10 states are still pending, those legislatures are on recess or done for the year so that legislation is effectively dead, Underhill said.

Skeptical justices at a hearing earlier this month questioned whether such a law could open the door to future requirements of medical and psychiatric records or school report cards.

Attorney Thomas Hiltachk argued for the state GOP that the law violated a 1972 voter-approved amendment guaranteeing that all recognized candidates must be on the ballot.

Republicans also said it would lower voter turnout in the primary, hurting Republican legislative and congressional candidates' chances of reaching the general election.

Trump has cited an ongoing Internal Revenue Service

audit in refusing to release his returns. Other courts have ordered Trump to turn over his tax returns to a Manhattan grand jury and the House of Representatives for separate investigations.

The US Supreme Court is weighing whether to intervene in the demand from a congressional committee or to let a lower appeals court ruling stand that would require disclosure of Trump's taxes.

Trump has also asked the high court to block a subpoena from a New York prosecutor for his tax returns.

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. is seeking the records in an investigation that includes alleged payments to buy the silence of adult film actress Stormy Daniels and Playboy centerfold Karen McDougal, both of whom claim they had affairs with the president before the 2016 presidential election. Trump has denied the allegations.

Joint appearance by Lebanon leaders at military parade

AP ■ BEIRUT

Lebanon's top politicians are attending a military parade on the country's 76th Independence Day.

They appeared together Friday for the first time since the government resigned amid nationwide protests.

Lebanon's president, parliament speaker and resigned prime minister sat together under a canopy at the Defense Ministry.

The traditional military parade in central Beirut has been called off as a protest camp still occupies the area, more than a month after anti-government demonstrations broke out. The limited Independence Day display reflects the nation's somber mood. Lebanon is facing its most serious political and economic crises in years.

Prez Rajapaksa appoints interim Cabinet in Lanka

Brothers take major portfolios

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Friday appointed a 16-member interim Cabinet, including two of his brothers, and gave the major portfolios of defence, finance and trade to them while inducting two Tamils as a sign of reaching out to the minority community.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, 74, got the key portfolios of defence and finance while the President's eldest brother Chamal Rajapaksa, 77, got trade and food security ministries.

"This is an interim government," Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who took over as the country's President on Monday, said during the swearing-in ceremony of the ministers.

He said the ministers of state would be appointed next week. Gotabaya Rajapaksa as the President cannot hold ministries although he is the head of the Cabinet.

The Tamil minority members came from the Tamil

dominated north and from the central tea plantations areas of Tamils of Indian origin.

Dinesh Gunawardena, 70, a veteran Marxist politician has been named as the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Mahinda Rajapaksa, 74, was appointed as the country's prime minister on Thursday after incumbent Ranil Wickremesinghe formally tendered his resignation to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

The Cabinet appointment is seen as interim until the President dissolves the current parliament and go for a fresh parliamentary election.

The next parliamentary poll is scheduled only after August 2020.

Soon after he was sworn in as the president, Gotabaya Rajapaksa thanked the powerful Buddhist clergy for backing his presidential bid and vowed to protect all communities, while giving foremost priority to Buddhism. He also thanked the Sinhala-majority people for electing him.

"I knew I would win the

presidency with support coming only from the Sinhala majority. I told the minorities to join me. I did not receive their support. But I will make sure that I will be president for everyone," he said.

Muslims make up nearly 10 per cent of Sri Lanka's over 21 million people, who are predominantly Sinhalese Buddhists. About 12 per cent of the population are Hindus, mostly from the ethnic Tamil minority. Some seven per cent of the population are Christians.

There are already concerns in the country that Gotabaya Rajapaksa's remarks may have led to apprehensions among the minority communities, who are already worried about the possibility of the return of an iron-fist rule under the Rajapaksa-duo's regime.

The two brothers, Mahinda and Gotabaya, led a decisive campaign that helped end the island nation's three decade long civil war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Trump thanks Pak, Afghan for release of western hostages

PTI ■ WASHINGTON / ISLAM-ABAD

US President Donald Trump in separate phone calls, thanked Pak Prime Minister Imran Khan and his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani for their support in release of two hostages American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks, the White House said.

On Tuesday, Australian Timothy Weeks, 50, and Kevin King, 63, an American, were handed over to US forces in Afghanistan's southern Zabul province. In return, the Afghan government freed three high-ranking Taliban prisoners.

The three members of the Taliban-linked Haqqani network who were released include Anas Haqqani, Haji Mali Khan and Hafiz Rashid.

The two separate calls were made by Trump on Thursday, the White House said.

In his phone call with Khan, Trump thanked for Pakistan's support for the

recovery of the two hostages, the White House said in a read-out of the call.

"Trump hopes this positive development will contribute to furthering the peace process in Afghanistan," it said.

"The two leaders also reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the United States-Pakistan trade relationship, which is on track to set a new record this year, as well as investment and people-to-people ties between our countries," the readout said.

Meanwhile, according to a statement from the Pakistan's Prime Minister Office, Khan also apprised President Trump of the current situation in Kashmir.

Appreciating President Trump's continued engagement as well as mediation offer, Prime Minister Khan stressed that the US president must continue his efforts for facilitation of a peaceful solution of the Kashmir issue, the statement said.

Trump has repeatedly



offered to mediate between India and Pakistan resolve the Kashmir issue.

New Delhi has been maintaining that Kashmir is a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan with no scope for third party mediation.

Recalling their conversations in Washington and New York, the two leaders agreed to deepen bilateral collaboration, including in relevant multilat-



eral fora.

The two leaders further agreed to remain in close contact.

In his call with Afghan President Ghani, Trump expressed appreciation for his support in freeing the two hostages. Trump affirmed the important role of the Afghan government in its country's peace process, it said.

"Both sides agreed a reduc-

tion in violence is necessary to move the peace process forward and for any intra-Afghan negotiations regarding a political settlement to be successful," the White House said. Trump and Ghani reaffirmed their mutual objective of defeating terrorist threats against the US and Afghanistan, it said.

The Taliban control nearly half of Afghanistan, and are more powerful now than they were at any time since the 2001 US-led invasion after the 9/11 terror attacks.

The US has continued to push for a ceasefire in the war-torn country and the opening of negotiations between the Taliban and the Kabul government.

The US has been conducting peace talks with the Taliban and the two sides were hopeful of a deal that included America cutting down on troops in Afghanistan and guarantees by Taliban of not allowing the Afghan soil to be ever used again for terror activities.



Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa (centre) speaks with his cabinet colleagues in Colombo on Friday. Rajapaksa, who was elected last week, said he would call a parliamentary election as early as allowed. The parliamentary term ends next August, and the constitution allows the president to dissolve Parliament in March and go for an election.

Beijing wants trade deal, can fight back, says Xi

AP ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping said Friday that Beijing wants to work for a trade deal with the United States but is not afraid to "fight back."

Reinforcing the upbeat tone adopted by China in recent days, Xi told a visiting U.S. business delegation that China holds a 'positive attitude' toward the trade talks.

"As we always said we don't want to start the trade war but we are not afraid," Xi said. "When necessary we will fight back but we have been working actively to try not to have a trade war."

"We want to work for a Phase 1 agreement on the basis of mutual respect and equality," Xi told the group.

The delegation from Bloomberg's New Economy Forum, a conference held in Beijing this week, included

former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson, former US Trade Representative Mike Froman and other dignitaries.

During the meeting at Beijing's ornate Great Hall of the People, Xi reiterated to the group China's stance that a deal requires "mutual respect and equality."

The Wall Street Journal reported Thursday that China's lead negotiator in the talks, Vice Premier Liu He, invited his U.S. counterparts to Beijing for more talks, suggesting hopes for progress.

The latest flareup in trade tensions came after President Donald Trump imposed punitive tariffs last year on billions of dollars' worth of Chinese exports to the US, seeking to ramp up pressure for changes in Chinese trade and investment policies.

China has retaliated with tariff hikes of its own. After gradual escalations of sanctions and halting progress in trade talks this year, the two sides are working toward what they say will be a preliminary agreement to pave the way for tackling more complex issues.

However, the prospects even for such a "Phase 1" deal are uncertain. China has said it wants a promise from the US side to gradually reduce the tariffs already in place. It's unclear if the US side would be willing to do that.

Meanwhile, Trump agreed to hold off on raising tariffs further last month pending the negotiations. But the US side still is due to hike tariffs on \$160 billion worth of imports from China next month.

That increase would boost prices on smartphones, laptops and many common household goods, right before Christmas.

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'India needs protocol on protecting US defence technology'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Acknowledging India's reliance on Russian military hardware for its defence needs, the Trump Administration has said that it wants New Delhi to address its protocols and processes on protecting sensitive military technology and procurement processes to be a "tighter and closer partner" of the US.

Responding to questions on Thursday, a senior State Department official reiterated that there is no blanket waiver for the punitive sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) on countries buying major defence equipment from Russia.

It's the significant acquisitions that put at risk inter-operability, the official said in response to a question on CAATSA sanctions.

"What's the message that's going to India, and where do you see them now, particularly with the potential purchase of a major system like the S-400?" the official was asked.

India announced its intention to acquire S-400 'Triumf' surface-to-air missile systems from Russia in 2015. The contract worth USD 5.43 billion was signed during the visit of President Vladimir Putin to India last year.

The US has opposed the S-400 deal with Russia with the Trump administration threatening to impose sanctions on the states that are acquiring weapons and military hardware from Russia. The official acknowledged India's purchases of military hardware from Russia but underlined that the Trump Administration is not seeking to punish a country with a long sustainment line.

"So the Indians, while very interested - as they should be - in co-research, co-development, and co-production - which we are interested in, and our industry's interested in, we don't want it exposed because

some Russians walking the shop floor decide to go walk away and put it in their handbag or knapsack and take it back to Moscow," the official, who spoke to reporters on the condition of anonymity, said.

"We're not going to allow that. So what we have pushed with Indians is: tighten your procurement processes, tighten up your defence technology security processes and protocols, and then you're putting yourselves in a much more mature space to be a tighter, closer partner," said the State Department official.

The official pointed out that by defence technology, "we're looking at unique technology that is either developed in the United States or we've co-developed with other partners, we don't want it stolen and we don't want it exploited."

And that's not just to India; that's to other partners that are aspirant to doing more co-research, co-development, co-production, the official said.

It's possible, industry's interested, the US is interested, but the administration can't do it in a fashion that will expose it and its industry, the official added.

Observing that the US recognises how India suffered at the fall of the Soviet Union, the official said a lot of those who were closely aligned with the Soviet Union - when those lines essentially got turned off - it was catastrophic if one was serving in the Ministry of Defence in India in the early 1990s. "So we get that," the official said.

"It's incumbent upon not just the State Department to advocate upon defence trade, it's incumbent upon us to protect our technology and protect what is unique about American systems and defence technology. If we don't do that, we're abandoning our duty and we're exposing not only our industry, we're also exposing our own national security," the official said.

'Reincarnation of the Dalai Lama a matter of religious freedom'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Tibetan people have the complete ownership over the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, a top Tibetan leader has said while asserting that the community would accept no role of China on this issue.

In July, China made it clear that the successor of the Dalai Lama has to be decided within China.

Senior Chinese officials and experts said the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must be approved by the Chinese government and the selection should take place within the country based on an over 200-year old historical process.

"The idea or the concept of reincarnation was invented by us 800 years ago on 4000 meters high Tibetan plateau. So we have complete ownership over it. We have complete patent over it," Lobsang Sangay, president, Central Tibetan Administration said in his address to the Heritage

Foundation think-tank.

"I know China is a major factory. They make a lot of duplicates. But as far as reincarnation is concerned they have no chance, because it was manufactured 4,000 meters high and pristine mountains and fresh water. So, we have complete copyright over it," the top Tibetan leader said asserting the Tibetan community would accept no role of Chinese on the issue of reincarnation.

"Reincarnation was invented by us and what we are saying is as far as reincarnation it's a matter of religious freedom. It is a matter of separation of church and state, where a state should not interfere in the matter of church," he told the audience.

So, the Dalai Lama's reincarnation or for that matter any reincarnated lamas should be decided by reincarnated lamas and no one else, he said.

"That's our argument," he said, adding that the US State

Department has said on record that it completely agrees with the Tibetan version on reincarnation.

The Dalai Lama is 84 years old now and the issue of his successor has gained prominence in the last couple of years in the wake of his health issues.

The 14th Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 following a crackdown on an uprising by the local population in Tibet.

India granted him political asylum and the Tibetan government-in exile is based on Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh since then.

The Trump administration is with the people of Tibet on religious freedom. In his key note address before the top American think-tank, Sangay said that the freedom is under attack in Tibet and warned that what China does with Tibet today implements over other minorities and other parts of the world later.

Having been to many capitals around the world, one can

clearly see that the Chinese government is trying to restructure the United Nations, he said, adding that China is now the second largest donors to the United Nations after the US.

Sangay said that the Chinese government is trying to redefine human rights and they have passed two resolutions in the UN Human Rights Council where essentially development precedes over democracy food precedes over freedom. Chinese influence, he said, is growing very strong in multilateral agencies.

Referring to his recent trip to Brussels wherein he was trying to establish a Tibetan intergroup in the European Union Parliament, he said that as many as 17 countries from European Union and Europe have signed up with China.

"Europe is divided now. There are 17 countries which in a way support or side with the Chinese government," he said. "Freedom is under attack,"

the Tibetan leader said.

"We have been going around and telling the international community that such human rights violations are taking place in Tibet. Often the countries will say well it's a sad case in Tibet but you are an exception, we can make deals with China, we can do business with China, we can have a diplomatic relationship with China," he said.

"That was mainly the narrative and that was the approach. Now with the crisis in Hong Kong and Xinjiang and especially we should not forget what's happening in Mongolia as well, it validates our argument. We are not an exception. It is the system you're dealing with. It's the socialism with Chinese characteristics in new era," he said.

Sangay said that China in recent months have gone on a publicity overdrive on reincarnation, as he referred to the common theme of the 17 foreign journalists who were



recently taken from Beijing to Tibet.

"India is a huge country and already the Chinese government is threatening India. Now you can imagine, what the Chinese government is doing to the rest of the world which are much smaller than India. So clearly freedom is under attack and we are being challenged and pushed," the Tibetan leader said.

Pope turns attention to needs of Thai church, young people

AP ■ SAM PHRAN (THAILAND)

Pope Francis tended to the needs of Thailand's tiny Catholic hierarchy Friday, urging priests and nuns to find ways to communicate the faith with "a Thai face and flesh" in an overwhelmingly Buddhist country.

Thousands of Thais welcomed Francis as he travelled to St. Peter's Parish, a Catholic community outside Bangkok, to pray at the sanctuary of Thailand's first martyred priest.

There, he told a few hundred priests and nuns that he read "with some pain" that for many Thais, Christianity is "a religion for foreigners."

"With that same intimacy, let us give faith a Thai face and flesh, which involves much more than

making translations." Children dressed as monks and nuns, as well as real-life religious and ordinary Catholics cheered him as he passed through the crowd outside the church in his popemobile and later on foot. "Viva il papa," or "Long live the pope," they shouted in Italian.

It was the first time in a generation that Thais have seen a pope up close, after St. John Paul II became the first pope to visit Thailand in 1984.

"It's been 35 years so everyone is so very happy," said Tuangsin Pureepaswong, a 60-year-old research engineer from Rayong province.

"May the Holy Father pray to God for us all." Pornnutcha Kruprasert, a 14-year-old training to be a nun from southern Prachuap Khiri Khan province, said she was "excited and delighted" to see the pope.

"The pope always has good thoughts for all youths," she said cheerfully. "We can bring his teachings into real life."

After meeting with clergy and nuns, Francis was meeting with members of his own Jesuit order and bishops from across Asia to encourage them to spread the faith as their missionary predecessors did. In the afternoon, he attends an interfaith encounter, where he's expected to highlight areas where Catholics can cooperate with Buddhists, Muslims and members of other Christian denominations.

Francis wraps up the day with a Mass dedicated to young people at Bangkok's Cathedral of the Assumption. He leaves Saturday for Japan for the second and final leg of his trip.

At the end of his first full day in Bangkok on Thursday, Francis celebrated Mass for an estimated 60,000 people at Bangkok's national sports stadium. There he

denounced the "humiliation" of women and children forced into prostitution — a reference to the human trafficking and poverty that help fuel the region's sex tourism industry.

In addition to Thais, Catholics came to see the pope from Vietnam, Cambodia and even China.

Siriwan Bunrachaisawan, a 23-year-old member of the S'gaw ethnic group from Mae Hong Son province, spent a full day Wednesday travelling from northern Thailand to attend the Mass.

She said she teared up when she finally saw Francis.

"I was overwhelmed," she said. "My heart is overwhelmed. It is the first time in my life." She said Francis' visit is particularly important for young Thais, to learn and think about their faith "and see that religion is something precious."



Priests, religious seminarians and Catechists touch the hands of Pope Francis as he leaves after meeting them at Saint Peter's Parish on the outskirts of Bangkok, Thailand on Friday. Pope Francis urged more efforts to combat the "humiliation" of women and children forced into prostitution as he began a busy visit Thursday to Thailand, where human trafficking and poverty help fuel the sex tourism industry.

Black shadows in HK's devastated campus

AFP ■ HONG KONG

Black shadows flitting around in small groups, deserted rubbish-strewn corridors and cockroaches in disemboweled kitchens: dawn broke on Friday to reveal a post-apocalyptic scene at a Hong Kong campus six days after a police siege began.

In a near-empty, soundless labyrinth, Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) is decoupled from the cacophony of a brash, bustling city of 7.5 million people.

The pro-democracy protesters holding this brick "fortress" are almost invisible as they hide among the maze of rooms and corridors.

They occasionally emerge, clustered in twos or threes and give interviews to the assembled media.

They are dressed and masked in black, the signature colour of the pro-democracy movement that over the past six months has turned into the biggest challenge to China's rule of Hong Kong since the city was returned from Britain in 1997. "The police say we are a hundred. We avoid giving a number but I can tell you that we are many more," says one protester who introduces himself as "Mike".

On the sprawling city centre campus, it is impossible to

say if he is inflating the figure.

Hundreds of protesters have left the PolyU in recent days, a large majority of whom were arrested. Many were aged under 18.

Some slipped out through the drainage system, others made a daring breakout by ropes to awaiting motorcycles.

In Friday's morning gloom the neon red sign of the "American Diner" still shines bright. But after being ransacked in the early stages of the siege, empty pots, paper cups and knives litter the canteen.

An array of empty beer bottles, canisters of petrol, cooking oil and chemicals are discarded on the floor - an abandoned workshop for molotov cocktails, which were thrown in their hundreds during the fierce defence of the campus from a police incursion earlier in the week.

"The battle of Saturday and Sunday was the most terrible fight in Hong Kong history," says Mike, who declines to give identifying details other than giving his age in his 30s.

This "brave" - as the front-line protesters call them - fears being arrested and facing serious charges.

He declines to say exactly his role in the initial clashes, but believes police at one point threatened to shoot at him with live fire.

After the initial confrontations, the stand-off turned into a siege as police surrounded the complex and arrested anyone who tried to escape.

Some of the protesters were beaten, with video footage showing police stamping on a subdued person's head.

Over the past couple of days a few of the diehard protesters have emerged looking weary and hungry.

The remaining ones also appear exhausted but are still defiant, as they await a police 'attack' that may never occur.

On Friday Hong Kong's new police commissioner said there was "no deadline" for the holdouts to leave the university.

Police aren't revealing their tactics, but after nearly one week it seems they may be prepared to just wait for the final protesters to emerge from the campus.

Inside, a foul odour emanates from canteens or kitchens where food has been spilled, attracting inch-long cockroaches.

In common areas, vending machines for snacks and cans have long been looted. But the fridges and freezers of the vast campus are still full.

"The police are wrong if they think we are going to surrender," says Mike.

"We have all the resources we need in water and food, we can keep going for a month."

Defiance ripples out from three other young protesters.

"We're not tired," says "Stephen". For Mike, hiding in the campus is his best chance of not getting arrested.

"It's about the probabilities. We have several thousand rooms in this campus. How many policemen can they send in? 100, 200," he says.

"They only have a 5 percent chance of finding us... if we go out, it's a 50-50 chance of being arrested."

Prince Charles warns of climate 'tipping point'

AFP ■ CHRIST CHURCH

Prince Charles warned Friday that time is running out to address the impact of climate change as he prepares to



visit one of the Pacific island nations most affected by global warming.

As he wrapped up a six-day trip to New Zealand ahead of three days in the Solomon Islands, Charles said the need for climate action was urgent. "We have reached a tipping point and we still have the ability to change course, but only 10 years," said the first in line to the British throne, who has been a passionate environmentalist for decades.

He said climate change was a scientific fact, rejecting suggestions from sceptics that "scaremongering" was dominating the debate.

"We have abused nature, exploited her and given her nothing back in return," he told an audience at Christchurch's Lincoln University.

"Nothing is sacred anymore, we are reaping a loss of biodiversity and experiencing the impacts of climate changes. We urgently need to pay the mounting debt."

He and wife Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, will have the chance to see the impact of climate change at close quarters when they make their first visit to the Solomon Islands on Saturday.

Some communities in the impoverished archipelago have already had to move because of rising seas and the entire population of about 660,000 has been affected by increasingly extreme weather, including wild cyclones.

Man found guilty of murdering British tourist in New Zealand

AP ■ WELLINGTON

A New Zealand jury on Friday found a man guilty of murder in the death of 22-year-old British backpacker Grace Millane.

Millane died last December on her birthday after meeting the man through the dating app Tinder, going out for drinks with him, and then returning to his hotel apartment in central Auckland.

Prosecutors said the man strangled Millane to death, while defense lawyers argued that the pair had been engaged in consensual erotic choking that went too far.

But the jury didn't buy the defense. After the three-week trial, they deliberated for about five hours on Friday afternoon before returning the guilty verdict. The name of the 27-year-old man is being kept secret for now by court order, a restriction that is sometimes imposed

in the New Zealand judicial system. The man will likely face a mandatory life sentence, which comes with a minimum 10-year non-parole period.

After he killed her, the man stuffed Millane's body into a suitcase, drove to the Waitakere Ranges forest and buried her in a shallow grave, where police found her body a week later. Millane had been traveling through New Zealand as part of a planned yearlong trip abroad after graduating from university.

Millane's death shocked many in New Zealand, which prides itself on welcoming tourists and where many people travel abroad as well. Hundreds of people attended candlelight vigils after she died, and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern spoke about New Zealanders feeling "hurt and shame" that she was killed in their country. The case has been closely followed in Britain

as well.

Among the key pieces of evidence for prosecutors was testimony from pathologists about the length of time, about five to 10 minutes, and amount of force it would take to kill somebody by strangling them.

Prosecutor Brian Dickey said that at some point, Millane would have lost consciousness, meaning the man would have needed to keep strangling her after she went lifeless under his grip, news organization RNZ reported.

One woman, who had previously dated the man, testified she feared for her life during a sexual encounter with him after the man sat on her face, restricting her breathing without her consent.

Prosecutors said the man took explicit photos of Millane after she died, RNZ reported, and used Google to search for "Waitakere Ranges" and "hottest fire" as he tried to fig-

ure out how to dispose of her body.

Defense lawyers argued Millane's death came down to two young, drunk and inexperienced people taking rough sex too far. The man told police that Millane had asked him to choke her and then encouraged him to use more force. The defense argued the Google searches were random and it wasn't until the next morning when the man woke up that he realized Millane was dead and panicked, deciding to bury her rather than calling emergency services.

Millane's parents traveled from Britain to watch the trial.

"It is natural for you to have sympathy for the Millane family and for Grace, who was here on what should have been a happy and exciting adventure," Auckland High Court Judge Simon Moore told jurors in his summing up, news organization Stuff reported.

US urges Pak to pose tough questions to China on CPEC

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Trump administration has urged Pakistanis to ask tough questions to China on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, as a top American diplomat launched a blistering attack on the multi-billion dollar project which the official claimed is going to take a toll on Islamabad's economy.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a planned network of roads, railways and energy projects linking China's resource-rich Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region with Pakistan's strategic Gwadar Port on the Arabian Sea.

The CPEC was launched in 2015 when President Xi Jinping visited Pakistan and it now envisages investment of over USD 50 billion in different projects of development in Pakistan.

"We hope Pakistanis will

ask Beijing tough questions on debt, accountability, fairness and transparency... Ask the Chinese government why it is pursuing a development model in Pakistan, that significantly deviates from what brought China its own economic success," Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Alice Wells said on Thursday in a major policy address.

"Why doesn't the Pakistani public know the price for CPEC's most expensive project, or how it's being determined on debt?"

"What are the long-term effects in Pakistan of Chinese financing practices?" the top American diplomat asked in her remarks on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in South and Central Asia, with emphasis on the CPEC.

In her speech at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for

Scholars, Wells said that the CPEC is a main initiative of the One Belt One Road project intending to bring Pakistan closer to China by addressing infrastructure needs, but potentially at an unsustainable cost to Pakistan.

"Together with non-CPEC Chinese debt payments, China's going to take a growing toll on the Pakistan economy, especially when the bulk of payments start to come up in the next four to six years. Even if the loan payments are deferred, they're going to hang over Pakistan's economic development potential hamstringing Prime Minister Khan's reform agenda," Wells said.

In July, the IMF had said Pakistan was facing "significant economic challenges" due to weak and unbalanced growth and that its economy is at a critical juncture where it needs an ambitious and bold set of reforms.

B'lore tops Indian cities on global prosperity index

PTI ■ LONDON

Bangalore emerged as India's highest ranked city at No. 83 in a new index of the world's 113 cities in terms of economic and social inclusivity, topped by Zurich in Switzerland.

The first-ever Prosperity & Inclusion City Seal and Awards (PICSA) Index, released in the Basque Country capital of Bilbao in northern Spain on Thursday evening, is designed to showcase not only the quantity of economic growth of a city but also its quality and distribution across populations.

Delhi at 101 and Mumbai at 107 are the other Indian cities to make it in the index, with the top 20 awarded a PICSA Seal as the world's highest-ranked cities building inclusive prosperity.

Bilbao, the host city of the new index, is ranked at 20.

"As the first ever non-commercial ranking index, PICSA provides a new measure of economic productivity that goes beyond GDP to provide a holistic account of how well people are doing in the economy and which have the populations that are most empowered to contribute to its economy and share in its benefits," explained Asier Alea Castanos, Director of Strategic Programmes at the Regional Council of Biscay, in reference to the index launch.

"There is increasing recognition in governments and also the private sector that success needs to be judged in new ways: factors like health, housing affordability and quality of life need to be put alongside jobs, skills and incomes when measuring prosperity," he said.

Commissioned by Basque institutions and compiled by D&L Partners, the PICSA Index measures factors such as the affordability of housing and access to education and healthcare, besides GDP per capita.



Baghdad tunnel becomes a museum for Iraq's protest

AP ■ BAGHDAD

The images are both haunting and inspiring, transforming a once dreary, grim underpass into a vivid, colorful wall of art.

"We want a nation, not a prison," says one painting that depicts a man bursting free from behind bars. "Plant a revolution, and you will harvest a nation," reads another showing a hand flashing the victory sign over protesters heads.

Some of the messages are less sentimental. "Look at us, Americans, this is all your fault," declares one.

The Saadoun Tunnel has become an ad hoc museum for Iraq's massive anti-government protest movement. Along its walls, young artists draw murals, portraits and graffiti that illustrate the country's tortured past and the Iraq they aspire to.

The tunnel passes under Baghdad's Tahrir Square, the



epicenter of the protests where thousands of people are camped out in a giant sit-in that has taken on the feel of a vibrant mini-city.

Almost daily, clashes erupt with security forces not far away firing tear gas, live rounds and stun grenades to prevent protesters from

crossing bridges over the Tigris River to the Green Zone, the seat of Iraq's government. Tuk tuks — three-wheeled motorcycle transports — often zip back and forth through the Saadoun Tunnel, rushing wounded protesters from the front lines to medical clinics.

Saadoun Tunnel, the tuk tuks, the square and a nearby 14-story Saddam Hussein-era building on the Tigris that protesters took over have all become symbols of what has become the largest grassroots protest movement Iraq has seen.

The protests erupted Oct. 1 over longstanding grievances at corruption, unemployment and a lack of basic services and quickly escalated into calls to sweep aside Iraq's sectarian system imposed after the 2003 US invasion and its entire political elite.

Young protesters, men and women, through the tunnel — actually a long underpass, most of which is open to the air except for enclosed portions directly beneath Tahrir — and pass time there hanging out or taking selfies in front of the murals.

Caricatures on the walls mock Iraqi politicians; other paintings praise the tuk tuks;



a woman with an Iraqi flag on her cheek flexes her bicep, recreating the famed US "We Can Do It" poster; faces in drawings shout in anger or pain.

Haydar Mohammed said he and a group of other medical students were partly responsible for the murals.

They met in Tahrir and saw the tunnels walls were a perfect medium to send a message to those who are suspicious of the protesters, he said.

"We are life-makers not death-makers," he said. "We decided to draw simple paintings to support our

protester brothers and to express our message, which is a peace message." Many of the murals carry calls for anti-sectarianism, peace and a free Iraq. In one painting, a little girl cries, declaring "They killed my dream," referring to the group of men behind her, some in religious clothes.

Another shows an Iraqi protester wearing a helmet against tear gas with the Arabic words: "In the heart is something that cannot be killed by guns, which is the nation." Nearby is scrawled, in English, "All What I want is life." "Sitting in front of these portraits, people and candles is better than being in any coffeshop. Every time I look at them I am hopeful that the revolution will not end," said Yahya Mohammed, 32, smoking a hookah in the tunnel and observing the scene.

"This tunnel gives me hope."

WALKTHROUGH 45 MINUTES



Golden times for the golden fibre

From traditional mats and household items to the jute sari, IITF this time is all about developing eco-friendly living. By TEAM VIVA

With plastics now a classified enemy, good old jute is back in our lives, manifesting itself as an array of lifestyle and household items at India International Trade Fair. And if you thought that it is only a functional textile, the jute saris on display showed how it could be the next big craze after khaki.

While the pure jute sari is a warming ethnic statement in the Delhi winter, its variants are also in demand. Jute has excellent blending qualities with other fibres and can be used in combination with pure silk saris, cotton saris, sico, art silk georgette, chiffon, dupion, tussar, organza, crepe and so on. The best part, these saris are strong and easy to carry even during the rough and tumble of a working day.

The fair has a slew of jute prod-

ucts — curtains, mats, jewellery, hair accessories and innovative toys and dolls. One of the stall owners, Rakesh Mehta, says, "You can find a variety of jute products here, right from a hair band to footwear. The pick-ups have been good and I am extremely happy." Emphasising on the lability of the textile, he adds, "Jute is first stripped from the plant, then scraped to remove the extraneous fibres and treated with chemicals for softening and smoothening it. The pure jute fabric properties, such as its strength, coarseness, roughness and thickness make it a great raw material for making sacks, ropes and especially saris." There are jute coasters and cushion covers, too, that have been combined with areca nut and corn.



Little did we know of another innovation, a jute layering for roads, which protects the surface from getting affected by seepage of water. Explains Vivek, who is doing a road-show on the same, "These mats will help the roads retain their quality for years. Nowadays we see roads breaking down every now and then. This is a very useful product on a large scale."



We noticed a woman vendor from Patna making a terracotta mural as earth elements make their way into our homes. Says she, "Terracotta toys and utensils are very popular but murals still have

their charm intact." Another earth element, bamboo furniture, was a hit too with people making eco-friendly choices.

Amid the expected line-up of a variety of attractive Pashmina

shawls and Madhubani paintings, the products made by the Tihar School of Art caught our attention. The prisoners at the jail make scented candles, biscuits, snacks and mustard oil every year. Its representative Ravi Mahajan tells us how portraits, paintings and jute bags were new additions and that the artworks presented interesting perspectives of the world seen from captivity.

Meanwhile, a nationalist mood has meant that a large number of students assembled near a CRPF stall, which displayed equipment and weapons.

Focussing on this year's theme — *Ease of doing business*, the general manager of the fair, Hema Maity says, "The theme was decided last year inspired by India's 63rd ranking on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index. It also

focusses on the need to bring more businesses into India and strengthen its trade market internationally."

The fair gives a deeper insight into Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSMEs), non-government agencies, artisans, self-help groups, and more.

A PhD scholar, Reena Dikshit, who has taken the oath to replace every plastic material, with wood gained appreciation from all over. She says, "I studied in detail about plastic and the increasing level of harm that it does. I then decided to replace every possible plastic product with wood. You will find that all my products are infused with a personal touch." Of course, the innovation is clearly evident in terms of multiple folding pieces, something which was once a preserve of the very moldable plastic.

CONVERSATION 30 MINUTES

NO END TO LEARNING

Whether it is her music or other activities, SHIBANI KASHYAP does not get hemmed in. By TEAM VIVA

You have done a variety of work, from singing at music festivals to being a judge. What has your journey been like?

I enjoy the journey more than the result. If you have passion and sincerity, you will achieve success. There have been many ups and downs too, which are necessary during the course of any career. But it's been interesting, from being a judge to a singer, composer, live performer and even a social activist. I feel that it's very important that we use the full spectrum of our talent. Especially for me, music is a tool to communicate with the world and I hope to bring about a change. Hence, I have a lot of cause-oriented songs. Last year I released one music video called *Want To Be Free*, which talks about our addiction to social media and how it takes over our lives. It makes us forget about the organic and real things. Now, I'm working on a song called *Don't Drink and Drive to Stay Alive*, a song against drunken driving. For me, it's not just about being a voice but, also a personality. I hope that I'm not just creating a brand of my own signature music but also something which people can relate to.

How have you explored various genres of music?

I love experimenting with different genres. It started with pop music with *Ho Gayi Hai Mohabbat*. And then I had a tryst with Sufi music, after I heard the *Kabbalah* sing in Rajasthan and at a Durga Puja show in Delhi. Something moved within me, I learnt qawwali and did my song.

Then I experimented with the Blues in *Kya Nazakat Hai* where I got Murad Ali (Muzaffar Ali's son) to do poetry. It's a very interesting fusion. I recorded a song called *Sonia* with Mika, which is a Punjabi Indian song. My latest is a fantastic Sufi remake of *Akhiyan Udeek Diyan* and *We Main Chori* with singer Suryaveer. It's an interesting collaboration.

One of my favourites has been the collaboration with the LA-based Reggae band, Big Mountain, who gave the hit *Baby, I Love Your Way*. So they got in touch with me and we did a song called *24 Hours Irresponsible*.

I'm really proud of that song because it's an Indie, Reggae Jazz song and it's really doing well on Spotify. The experiments still continue.



How is it, performing live in front of an audience?

I love it. It gives me an instant energy exchange with the audience and also a one-on-one response from them when I sing. I have been performing live for more than 19 years now. I started in 2000. From performing at the Channel V awards in 1998; winning an award; performing across the world, I have been blessed. I have done four concerts in Egypt. Then there was a recent tour around the USA, where I held a show in New York, Washington DC and Nashville. Now, I am all set to perform in Gurugram, which is also my hometown and I'm really excited. I will be singing a combination of my latest hits and some covers. We are a six piece band including me — I play the guitar. We have a flutist, keyboardist, guitarist, bass guitarist, drummer and Indian percussionist.

You have a wide range, so how do you customise your playlist in a way that you connect better with the audience?

Sometimes an artist might get bored performing the same set over and over again. And I do too. So I try to innovate on each performance according to the category and target audience of my show. For instance, in Egypt, they really love the songs of

Shahrukh Khan and Amitabh Bachchan. So there, we did an entire Bollywood musical history, where I began my performance with the music of the 1940s, till contemporary times. You really need to research before you hold a show in a particular region before you choose your playlist for them. Soon I'll be travelling to Sengal and do four shows in Africa. They also love Bollywood. So I'll be customising this show in a very different and colourful format and twelve dancers will accompany me.

Also, when it comes to college shows, students really like Rock music. And they love melancholic songs, about love and romance. Of course, Punjabi music works everywhere in the world so that is the *tadka* I put in the second half of my shows. I also add Sufi, which is of course, my own signature music.

With the current Rap culture ruling the industry, do you think other genres are losing their charm?

Rap music has been around for the longest time and it's caught on in a big way, especially after Ranveer Singh's *Gully Boy*. However, it doesn't interfere with other genres of music. If you take a film like *Kabir Singh*, its music is very melodious with no traces of Rap at all. So it's mostly about content. It's about how

good the music is, how well it has been composed, rendered and delivered. So it's not that if Rap is trending, people will only listen to that. Let's not undermine and underestimate our audience. With all the audio streaming platforms today, we get exposed to a variety of music. So I think there's room for everything. Hip Hop is what I'm coming up with in my next song called *Ishq*, which is an collaboration with DJ Sin from the UK. It's a UK-based music label called 'Your Damn Self'. I am really excited about it because they specialise in R&B.

What would you say about the charm of your specialisation, the Sufi-Western blend?

First, thank you for calling it a charm. Yes, I always had to create magic and when you fuse different genres together, there is definitely a jam and some magic. And that's what I like to do. I like to experiment with different genres. Sufi comes naturally to me. The Western and Sufi blend especially is something in which I am very involved and it's inexplicable.

As artistes, when we have something natural to offer, it is always more convincing and far more magical. So there's a certain divinity in it, and that's what I try to do through all my songs. I like to have a Sufi and Western blend.

Where do you think are the global trends heading?

I think globally everybody is ready to absorb different kinds of music. And it's pretty much the same everywhere you go, when you have music apps and are exposed to all genres. We have our own home-grown random music, which is Bollywood, an Indie Pop and folk music and classical music. And then we have the exposure to Western music and all kinds of genres. Globally, Spanish music is trending a lot. Especially songs like *Desperado* and *Senorita*, they are like global number one hits. So there is something about this language and about the music of Spain, which is hitting the right note. Melody is back. In between, the music was very noisy and it was just about sounds. But now with artistes that hold a lot of expression, I would say a lot of lyrical and musical content is back. And of course, I love Latino and Spanish music and I'm really happy that that is a trend because I completely ascribe to it.

A PLAYER'S NEXT GOAL

Actor PRACHI TEHLAN talks about how her prior experience of acting in TV helped her get into her character as the strongest woman in Kerala in *Mamangam*. By TEAM VIVA

If given a chance, whose biopic would you like to act in as? Well, most common answers would be people's role models and different ideals. But sportsperson-turned-actor Prachi Tehlan, who has made her debut in the South with period film *Mamangam*, opposite Mammootty, wants to make her own biopic since she looks at her life story as challenging if not inspiring.

"I have made films on boxing. If given an opportunity, I would love to showcase my own story because my journey in sports has been an adventurous one in various ways. If I get a good director and a writer, I would definitely share my experiences and a story can be made out of it, which doesn't necessarily need to be about someone. It can simply be about sportspersons or the journey of a women's basketball team. For instance, *Chak de India!*" says Prachi, also a netball and basketball player who has represented India at the Commonwealth Games 2010.

She tells us how joining the film industry was like a destiny's call. "I had just randomly got a call for a role in a TV soap and I quite liked the character. It was basically an opportunity that came knocking on my door. I was nowhere near to films or TV. I took it as an opportunity and became an actor. But yes, it wasn't as easy as it sounds because both the fields are very different," says the actor, who made her TV debut with *Diya Aur Baati Hum*.

The process of reaching films has been very organic for Prachi as a prior experience with TV helped her. "When I started acting, my first step to understanding it came from my door. I was working on a daily soap. I was undergoing an intense training. I had to face the cameras everyday. That helped me a lot and I ended up bagging this role in *Mamangam*."

Based in Valluvanad, a conservative town in Kerala, the film, which releases in four languages including Hindi, is a period drama that revolves around Chaver Thalavan (played by Mammootty) and Unnimayya (played by Prachi). She says, "It's a story that's set around the time of the Mamangam



festival, which was celebrated around 400 years ago in Kerala. It narrates a story of some unsung heroes during the time. My character is that of a *devadasi*, who is also an entertainer and a warrior." Well, Unnimayya, who represents the strong old women of Kerala, quite resonates with Prachi's real life journey and transition from being a basketball player to an actress.

Since the war drama features the martial art of Kalaripayattu, Prachi says that there was an intense training and research involved. "I watched films like *Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja*, *Urumi*, which are also period dramas and come from similar eras, for reference. It did look challenging but I just went with the flow," says she.

So how did she contemporise the sensibilities? She replied, "I asked a lot of questions from the director. And he told me how it's entirely different than what I have done before. But I didn't find it that difficult because I have done TV. When you keep on playing the same character and bring out its different nuances on TV, you kind of learn how to adapt. I just had to adapt into a serious character and

tend to understand it better." After working in two Punjabi films and now a Malayalam one, the actor has plans to work in Bollywood. But she believes that Malayalam cinema has a lot of scope as it caters to the sensible audience who is sensitive towards societal issues. "Malayalam films are the most sensible cinema made in India. They are very intelligent, sensitive to things and don't like unnecessary commercial *masala*. Its audience likes to watch films that make sense at the end of the day," says Prachi.

Only a few films from South India have had a mass appeal across India and globally, the most recent example being that of *Baahubali*. However, Prachi calls it a "wrong comparison." "*Baahubali* is fiction but this is based on true events. There is a lot of difference. *Baahubali* was more commercial and very loud. It was exaggerated to appeal as a mass entertainer. But *Mamangam* is infused with very realistic elements. Here, the sets are original, and even the acting is subtle. The story is beautiful. It connects with the audience very emotionally," she adds.

SHORT CIRCUITS



DEV PATEL

For us, we lived in the siege for 3 months and everytime we see a hotel entry and exit, it takes us back to the series of events. It was traumatising. But as an artiste you invest whole heartedly in these characters. You give a part of yourself in these roles. I hope that when people watch me on screen, they are able to see that.



ARSHAD WARSI

I think when I started, things were simpler, people were less complicated and baggage was less. Now it is a bit more complicated. Earlier, you were an actor, now you are a product. You are a commodity, which needs to be sold. So, you have to dress in a certain way, you have to walk and talk a certain way, look a certain way.



SAJID KHAN

Basically, the entire team thought about the strategy but Salman *bhai* is the person who takes the final decision when it comes to music of the film. He is, Masha Allah, a very talented and musical man. He has the knack to bring his own personality into music and he advises us.



RANI MUKHERJEE

My favourite cricketer has always been Sunil Gavaskar. The reason behind this is, when I was young, my parents watched a lot of cricket, and I have seen him play from those days. When I used to watch him play, there was some enigma around him when he used to walk to the ground; it was electrifying.

JACK BLACK

Jumanji is a great game in the world. And when you play you often think who made this extraordinary game ... a possible plotline for the third part. I had a ball playing my new characters. I don't know about which one is my favourite as when I am doing it at the moment.



ENCOUNTER 45 MINUTES

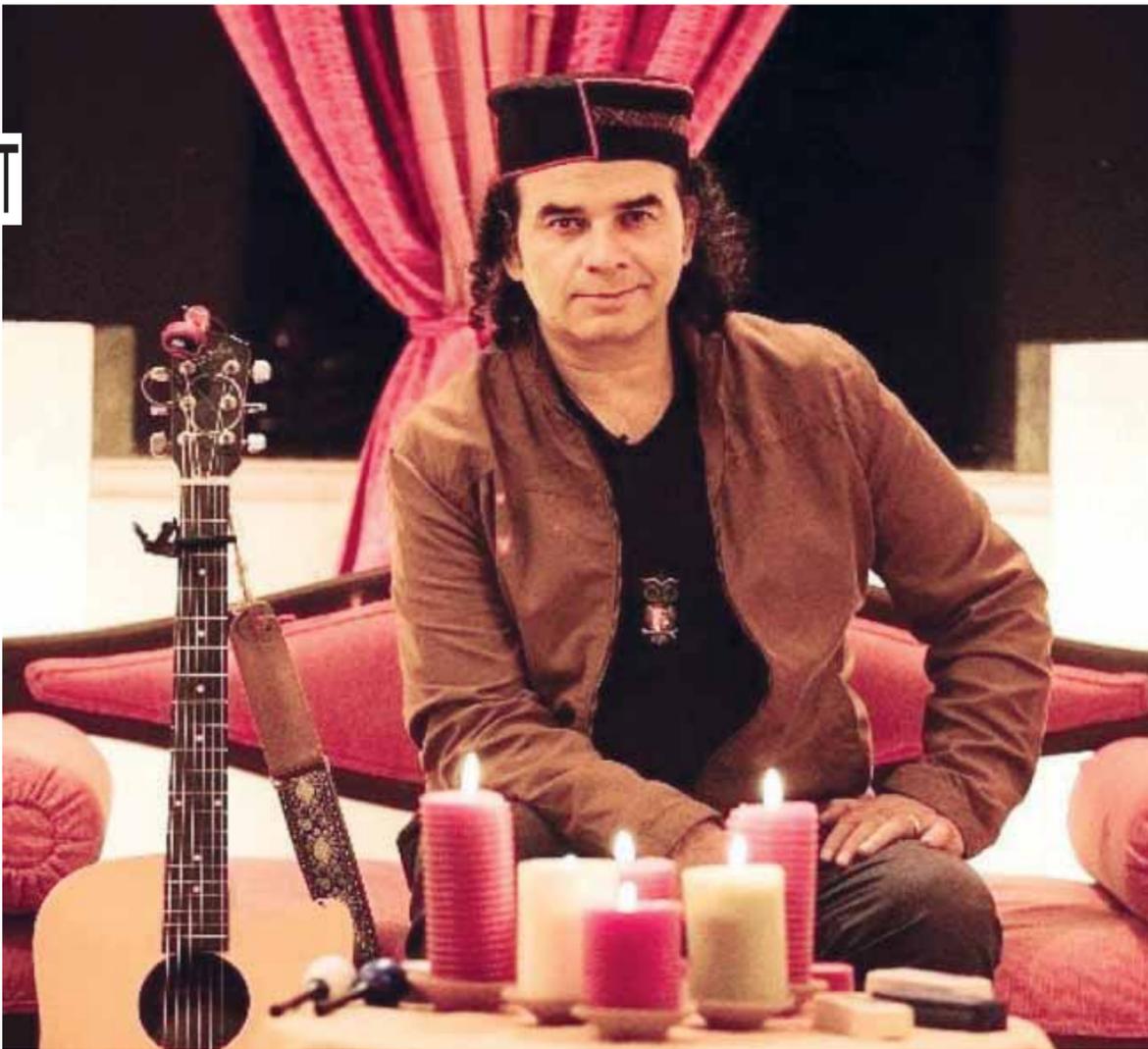
SONGS OF THE HEART

Singer MOHIT CHAUHAN gives voice to characters while establishing an invisible connect that cannot be broken, says TEAM VIVA

Sajra Savera Mere Tan Barse Kajra/ Andhera Teri Jalti Lau Katra Milla Jo Tere Dar Par Se, O Maula... Mohit Chauhan's voice wafted softly across the screen and then soared as Ranbir Kapoor looked up at the dome of Hazrat Nizamuddin's dargah for salvation and inspiration. While creating an iconic cinematic moment where the audience connected with the despair that the singer Janardhan, who would soon metamorphosis into Jordan, felt, Chauhan became inseparable from the film that firmly established him in the realm of songs that were ethereal and could not be replicated. In ephemeral times, *Rockstar*'s music still continues to feature in the playlists of millennials and Generation Z (as well as their parents) despite the passage of eight years.

The voice, which expressed the emotions effortlessly, connected with thousands of others who failed to bring out the same emotion and wanted to. He, sort of, gave words to everybody's feelings. While Imtiaz Ali, AR Rahman and Irshad Kamil created the cult film, it was only Chauhan who could have expressed each of the emotions that Jordan goes through, whether it is the unattainable love that he felt for Heer or the anguish he feels at her death or the rage at the system. Mohit, who is in the capital to perform at the *Mayur Utsav*, feels that *Rockstar* is one of the most important milestones in his musical career. He met Imtiaz for the first time, when music composer Pritam Chakraborty to sing in *Jab We Met*. "But it almost did not happen. He shares, 'I had disappeared into the mountains and they were not able to contact me because I am not fond of using phones too much. A couple of months went by and I got a call from Imtiaz saying, 'where have you been? We have been trying to get in touch with you desperately for almost three months'. Then I came to Mumbai and sang that song. I am still very thankful that he waited for me. There were so many singers, he could have easily approached someone else but he didn't." And that's where their relationship started. Gradually they were on the same wavelength. Interestingly, Mohit says that right from *Tum Se Hi* to every song that he has sung for Imtiaz's film is written by Irshad Kamil. And they have been all very successful songs. "It's so great to spend time with him. He's an amazing director as well as a great friend," says he.

Mohit says that it's almost like a



spiritual experience to be able to sing about 10 to 11 songs in one film. I sang *Sadda Haq, Tum Ho, Kian Faya Kun* and *Phir Se Ud Chala* in the same film, which is extremely unheard of. A playback singer usually sings one or two songs in a single film. People use six music directors and then 10 different singers for 10 songs. But to be able to sing all of them in just one album is an indescribable feeling. I went through all the emotions that an artist can go through and express. Also, the character that I was singing for was like really close to me. Almost like me as the story is that of a contemporary musician and his journey. How he learns music all by himself, so all the emotions and expressions were so real for me," says he and narrates how he met AR Rahman. He says, "I was a part of the band called Silk Route. We sang songs like *Dooba Dooba* and *Boondein*. There was this huge music award festival in Delhi in November, 1998. That evening we won four awards. We got the best songs, best debut and best band of the year award. I met him there for the very first time. I paid my respects to him and he complimented me saying, 'Your band has a beautiful sound'. He, later, asked me if I have every tried singing



in films. I replied in the negative. Then almost after five years later, I got a call from him for *Khoon Chala for Rang De Basanti*. That was my first song. And that's when my musical journey started. It has been really amazing since then to work with him. I really consider myself fortunate to record with him, under his guidance."

The singer has always been keen on promoting arts and culture. He believes that it's a natural process that when you

value art, you feel the urge to promote it more and why not? "Folk music should be heard by people and especially by the younger generation, so that they understand, absorb and enjoy our roots and culture. I have always promoted folk music because it's related to our tradition and culture. It's great to be a part of art and make it a part of you," feels Mohit.

The most important change that has happened over the years, according to him, is the advent of technology. It has become much easier for individuals of all kinds to be able to showcase their talents. "A lot of people have gained acclaim just because of the internet. That's something huge and good, especially for the artistes," says he.

It was in 2017, when the singer himself started his online show, CoHear, on YouTube. "I did it for a year. I am a traveller. I always travel to hills. The idea came from my wife. She said that 'you hang out so much in the mountains, why don't you do this live concert show?' And then I thought about it. People love to come to concerts but not everyone is able to attend them. I got a really good response for that. Nobody was doing it at that time," says he.

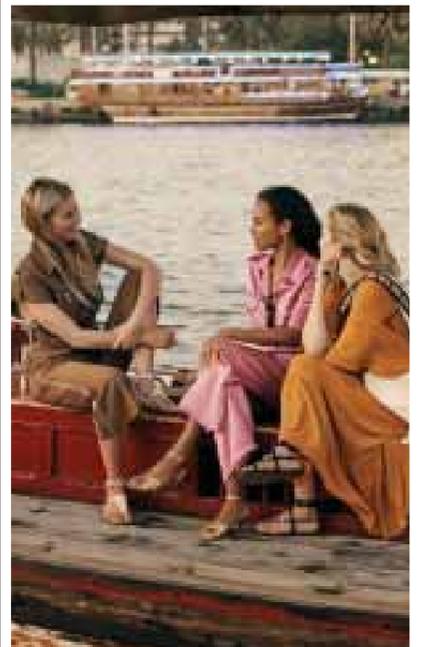
Mohit has also been conducting var-

ious workshops in colleges. He feels that it's great to inspire someone with your own story. He says, "I was made the ambassador for the Skill India initiative. I really feel, it's about turning your passion into your skill. It's, in fact, a theory — if you are passionate about something you spend so much time on it that it becomes a skill, which you can use to reach out to people and make things better. I have learned from artists who are senior to me or people that I have read about in their biographies. I loved hearing how they made their music, what came in their mind and everything, so that inspires me to do my work. In the same manner I can help youngsters understand that they can do it too. After all, they are the future."

Just like 'I Love New York', every city has a campaign. Ask Mohit what does he think can be done to brand Delhi, and he will tell you that Delhi is a great city with a greater history. "The capital will always remain, 'Dilvalon ki Dilli'. Delhiites are filled with love. Their hearts are pure and the amount of energy they have is unbeatable. Each and everything adds colour to this beautiful city," says the singer.

(Mayur Utsav is on November 24 and 25.)

Hollywood girl gang in Dubai



An eight-minute short film titled *A Story Takes Flight*, starring Hollywood stars Gwyneth Paltrow, Zoe Saldana and Kate Hudson, has captured the imagination of netizens with its vivid portrayal of landscapes in and around Dubai.

Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing launched the film, shot by Emmy and Director's Guild award-winning director Reed Morano. In the film, the three Hollywood stars are seen embarking on three journeys of exploration through Dubai, filled with inspiration, discovery, and human connections.

This global campaign resolves the mystery of the last edition of Dubai's popular #BeMyGuest series. In the last video, Shah Rukh Khan bumped into Hollywood actress Gwyneth Paltrow on a beach.

The campaign showcases unique locations spread across the Emirate that include the old souks, the Dubai Creek and the vast expanse of sand dunes.

Sharing her travelling experience in Dubai, Gwyneth Paltrow said: "One of my favorite parts of traveling is to truly connect with a city, its people and the local culture. Dubai is special because it's a melting pot. Both the ones born here, who are so proud of their heritage, and those who are recent transplants, bringing with them their own values and traditions, contribute to writing the future story of the city. My time in Dubai was beyond anything I expected and there's still so much more to see."

Kate Hudson spent a lot of time exploring the winding streets of Old Dubai. "It's incredible to find such a vibrant art and music community in the heart of such a modern, futuristic city — which is what most people think Dubai is. But really, the friendliness of the people is what made my visit amazing, and it's why I'll come back," Hudson added.

Said Issam Kazim, CEO, Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DCTCM) said: *A Story Takes Flight* is unlike any other film in that it speaks to this defining character of our city. It is a story of each person's discovery through their interaction with Dubai. Regardless of who you are or where you are from, your journey with us also has no finish line — and the paths to explore are endless."

STUDIO CHAT 15 MINUTES

Experience matters

Executive producer and author of *His Dark Materials*, PHILIP PULLMAN tells us how CGI is just a value-addition to story-telling



How did this TV series of *His Dark Materials* come about?

It was a few years ago. There had been various attempts to make adaptations of this story and in all sorts of different media. It's been on the stage. It's been on the radio, it's been a film, but I was always attracted to the idea of long-form television, as we now call it. It gives the opportunity to tell a long story in full. When you adapt a long novel to a movie, which can only be realistically about two hours in length, you have to lose a great deal,

but TV does allow a story to be unfolded in more or less real-time.

Why do you think now was the time to do it? Was it the advance of CGI technology?

I'm not sure that the CGI argument is the best one for doing it now. Yes, CGI is extraordinarily effective now and it's possible to create demons, animals, all sorts of things and put them on screen as if they're alive, but there's a story-telling problem with that. Which



has to do with the fact that you mustn't crowd the screen. If we had a demon in the shot every time there was a person in the frame, it would be very cluttering and it would be a terrible job for the script writer and director. What you want to do is focus the viewer's attention on the important thing. In most cases, it's the person not the demon. We don't find it difficult in the book because the narration only draws attention to the demon when they say something or when they do something. But if they're not doing anything, as they're not for quite a lot of the time, we don't need to have them around. So, it's a storytelling problem really rather than a CGI problem.

How protective of your story were you?

In any adaptation, the story has to suit the nature of the medium into which it's going. If a story goes from a novel onto a stage, for example, you'd have to arrange the story in such a way that every element in it is clear, both to the person on the front row and the person on the back of the stalls.

Also, there's a matter of getting on and off stage: you have to adapt the story. It's the same thing for television, same thing for films, same thing for radio, so it's inevitable. I wasn't going to be insistent that every single item in the story had to be exactly presented as it was on the page.

Why do you think your novels have proved so popular and enduring?

I think the thing that keeps most people reading once they've started reading is the fact that they're intrigued by what's going to happen to the main character. This

is why children follow along stories through all sorts of complexities, enigmas and mysterious passages. They want to know what happens to Lyra. She doesn't know what's going to happen to her, she's in a state of mystery and doubt for some of the time. The kind that reassures the reader because they know that if they follow Lyra there'll be alright. I think that's one of the things that's kept people's imagination going.

I also think it's because the story as a whole concerns something that every one of us experiences, goes through in our life. That's the change from childhood to adulthood, from innocence to experience, in terms of William Blake. The meaning of puberty, not under the obvious physical, sexual changes, but the changes in the way we apprehend things, the way we think of things, the way we see the world. That's the heart of the story and because that's something that happens to all of us, I think that's where people have related to.

(*His Dark Materials* will soon premiere in India on Star World.)

Special one to rescue Spurs?

Mourinho seeks quick fix to win over Lilywhites doubters

AFP ■ LONDON

Jose Mourinho believes the quality of players he has at Tottenham do "not belong" down in 14th in the Premier League as he tries to salvage Spurs' season.

Mourinho starts his tenure at a third English club after grossly different experiences at Chelsea and Manchester United hoping to inspire Tottenham's first away win in the league since January at West

Ham today.

That run saw Mauricio Pochettino sacked on Tuesday just six months after reaching the Champions League final.

Pochettino's five-and-a-half years at the club transformed Tottenham's fortunes. The Argentine made Spurs Champions League regulars and eventually paid for his own success in raising the bar of expectations.

It also paved the way for a marriage of convenience. Tottenham needed to make a statement with Pochettino's successor to prove their growing status, and so turned to Mourinho.

Similarly, t h e



Portuguese needs a project that will rebuild his reputation after an unhappy two-and-a-half years at Manchester United.

"In the short term we have to try to get results," said Mourinho on Thursday.

"It is important in the Premier League we need to disappear from the area where we do not belong."

Spurs start the weekend 11 points adrift of the top four having taken just 25 points from their last 24 Premier League matches.

However, Mourinho insisted he will not make



Manchester City teammates Kevin De Bruyne and Sergio Kun Aguiero chats during team's practice session ahead of home game against Chelsea AP

West Ham vs Tottenham
Live from 6:00pm IST
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

big changes in personnel or to the team's style of play amid concerns from supporters that the manner in which he has won so much silverware in his career is not an easy fit with Spurs' traditional brand of attacking football.

"The style of play has to be always adapted not just to the club culture, but especially to the players' qualities," he added.

"These are the players, they have the qualities, adapted to a certain way of playing football, and that's the way I want to do it."

Mourinho has spent 11 months out of the game since being sacked by United in December.

And he cut a far more introspective figure as he briefed the media on Thursday than the man who announced himself as "the special one"

during his first press conference as Chelsea manager 15 years ago.

"I always thought that these 11 months were not a waste of time. These 11 months were months to think, to analyse, to prepare and anticipate things," added Mourinho.

"I had time to think about many things. Don't ask me what are the mistakes, but I realise that during my career I made mistakes. I am not going to make the same mistakes, I am going to make new mistakes."

"From an emotional point of view I'm relaxed, I'm motivated, I'm ready and I think the players they felt that in these two days."

"They felt that I'm ready. I'm ready to support them. This is not about me. In your career but also in your life, you go through moments and periods and I am in a period where it's not about myself at all. It's about my club, my club's

fans, my players."

Even if Mourinho claims to be a changed man, his reputation precedes him.

There was no love lost in many clashes with Tottenham in his Chelsea days and that allied to the joy Pochettino brought the Spurs fanbase leaves many unconvinced this managerial change is one for the better.

In his glory days at Chelsea, Porto, Inter and early in his spell at Real Madrid, M o u r i n h o could always rely on results to win over the doubters.

That is what he needs to provide Spurs' supporters with, starting today.



Juve take Atalanta in Serie A battle

AFP ■ TURIN

Cristiano Ronaldo conceded he is not '100 percent' despite his goal spree for Portugal but always ready to play as injury-hit Juventus head to Atalanta today looking to extend their unbeaten run this season to stay top of Serie A.

Juventus visit fifth-placed Atalanta before hosting Atletico Madrid in the Champions League next week.

Maurizio Sarri's side are just one point ahead of Antonio Conte's Inter Milan after 12 matches, with Lazio and Cagliari eight points adrift of the leaders in joint third.

Atalanta have gone three league games without a win and will be eager to get back into the Champions League berths, as they sit two points off fourth place, before next week's

trip to Shakhtar Donetsk.

Their fortunes have slipped following the thigh injury suffered to Colombian star Duvan Zapata, who scored six goals in six Serie A matches before being sidelined for their last five league games.

As Atalanta sweat on Zapata's return, Juventus will be without full-back Alex Sandro, who picked up a thigh problem playing for Brazil, with Blaise Matuidi recovering from a rib injury.

Full-back Danilo, who scored his first goal for Brazil during the international break, warned: "The games after the international break are never easy, let alone against Atalanta, a team who are doing well."

"We can't make mistakes or underestimate them."

Inter will be looking to make it a perfect seven league games on the road this season as they travel to Torino, before their European trip to Slavia Prague.

Conte's side face a tough task against the Andrea Belotti-powered Torino, who ended their six-match winless run against Brescia last time out, and are in 11th position.

Serie A runners-up Napoli are in crisis, having slipped to seventh, and desperately need a result at 14th-placed AC Milan, who are themselves floundering.



Atalanta vs Juventus
Live from 7:30pm IST
SONY TEN 2 NETWORK

India finish WC Final on high

PTI ■ PUTIAN

India finished their engagements at the ISSF World Cup Finals on a high, with their shooters featuring in teams that won the President's Trophies for both the 10m air pistol and air rifle mixed team competitions here on Friday.

In the mixed air pistol final, Manu Bhaker first paired with world number one Russian Artem Chernousov to get the better of the India's Saurabh Chaudhary and Olympic champion Anna Korakaki 17-13.

It was then the turn of

Divyansh Singh Panwar to team up with Croatian legend Snjezana Pejic, to win the trophy in the 10m air rifle mixed team competition. Divyansh and Snjezana prevailed 16-14 over India's Apurvvi Chandela and D Zhang.

It got even better when Shahzad Rizvi also won Bronze in the 10m air pistol mixed team competition.

Both Manu and Divyansh had earlier won their individual 10m competitions air pistol and rifle, ensuring that India topped the medals tally with three Gold medals.



Jos Buttler, centre top, watches as the ball rolls near the stumps AP

England on top in see-saw battle

AFP ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

The manner of Kane Williamson's dismissal and a blow to the head of Henry Nicholls put the maiden Test wicket at Bay Oval under scrutiny with three days to play in the first Test between New Zealand and England on Friday.

In the first Test at the ground, the wicket showed signs of becoming unpredictable late on day two.

Although honours appeared even after the first two days, England believe if the wicket continues to deteriorate then they are in the box seat.

New Zealand go into day three today at 144 for four in reply to England's first innings 353, but with Williamson and Ross Taylor already dismissed.

Williamson had cruised to 51, reaching his half-century with a boundary off Sam Curran, but fell on the next delivery which unexpectedly

reared sharply, forcing the New Zealand skipper to take evasive action and the ball was gloved to second slip.

Nicholls, who was not out 26 at stumps, was felled by a sharp bouncer from Jofra Archer but a medical check showed no immediate sign of concussion, although he will undergo a further examination before resuming today.

Earlier after England resumed the day at 241 for four, Stokes and Ollie Pope advanced the total to 277 when Southee struck with three wickets in 11 balls including the prized scalp of Stokes for 91.

Buttler and Leach forged a late 52-run stand but otherwise there was little England resistance at the bottom of the order.

Southee finished with four for 88 and Wagner took three for 90, while Curran was the pick of England's bowlers with two for 28.

Zidane urges fans to back Bale

AFP ■ MADRID

Zinedine Zidane has urged Real Madrid fans to get behind Gareth Bale and insists he does not believe the Welshman is happier playing for his country than Real Madrid.

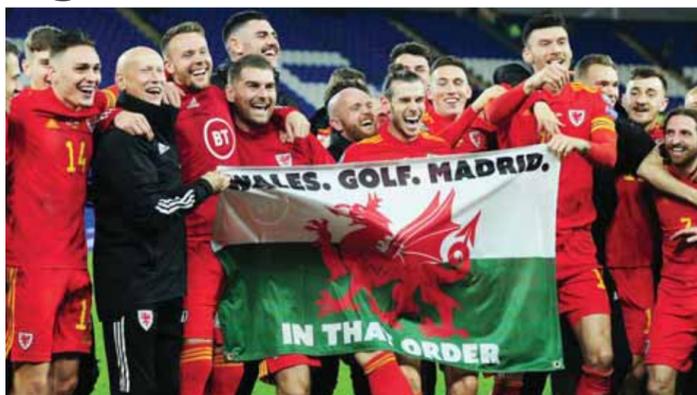
Madrid play Real Sociedad at the Santiago Bernabeu today, when Bale is likely to feel the frustration of the home supporters.

The 30-year-old sparked outrage in the Spanish press this week after he celebrated Wales' victory over Hungary on Monday with a flag from the crowd that read: "Wales. Golf. Madrid. In that order."

The slogan has been adopted by Welsh fans after an interview given by former Madrid player Pedja Mijatovic to Cadena Ser, in which he referred to those as Bale's priorities.

It has been interpreted in Spain as a slight against Real Madrid, particularly after Bale played twice for Wales over the international break, having missed the last six matches for his club through injury.

But, in a press conference on Friday, Zidane refused to criticise Bale. "When you look at what he has given to the club and the fans, that is what we are all here for: for the club."



Gareth Bale celebrates with Wales teammates after his team won in Euro 2020 qualifiers against Hungary UEFA/Twitter

R Madrid vs R Sociedad
Live from 1:30am (Sunday)
FACEBOOK

"Gareth is one of the team and the fans have to be behind us, always. I will always be behind my players. Outside, things can happen but inside, we should only look at the football."

Zidane would not comment on whether Bale's celebrations were aimed at Real Madrid or the media's criticism of him for spending too much time

playing golf. "I'm not going to get into that, it's not my area," Zidane said. "What I can tell you is Gareth Bale is my player. That's what interests me."

Bale has not played for Real Madrid since October 5 but his recovery came just in time for him to play twice for Wales last week, meaning he is fit to face Real Sociedad in La Liga.

"There is a lot of noise around Gareth but the most

important thing for him and for me is to focus on football," Zidane said.

"He has been away, he has been able to play and now he is back and is available."

"He can make the difference, he is a decisive player. If he is fit, he has shown he is a key player and he will show it again."

It remains to be seen if Bale returns to the starting line-up against Real Sociedad, who have enjoyed a brilliant start.

Fortune favours the Dave

Australia vs Pakistan
Live from 5:30am IST
SONY SIX NETWORK

BRISBANE (AFP): Pakistan were left to rue a basic error from 16-year-old debutant Naseem Shah as Australia opener David Warner plundered the visitors' attack with a brilliant 151 not out on the second day of the first Test at the Gabba on Friday.

Australia finished the day on 312 for the loss of just one wicket, 72 runs ahead of Pakistan's first innings total of 240 and already in the driving seat.

Marnus Labuschagne was alongside Warner on 55, with the only wicket to fall that of Joe Burns, who made 97 before sweeping a Yasir Shah (1-101) delivery onto his stumps.

Warner scored his first Test century since a year-long ban for ball-tampering, but only after a huge let-off when he was caught behind off a Naseem no-ball.

The mercurial opener was on 56 at the time, and he then



David Warner celebrates after hundred

survived a near run-out on 93 before ending a century drought stretching back nearly two years.

"For me it's about going out there and backing my ability," he said, insisting he never felt any pressure about his place in the side.

"At the end of the day you get selected or you don't get selected and you've just got to accept that."

Earlier, Naseem looked impressive on debut and regularly bowled at over 145 kilometres (90 miles) per hour, but he was guilty of overstepping the mark on a number of occasions, despite not being called by the umpire.

He looked like he belonged on the big stage with a number of bristling spells before leaving the field late in the day with an apparent leg injury.

"He won't get a harder Test debut, bowling at the Gabba," Warner said.

"He kept his speed up the whole day — he charged in all day, there's a (future) superstar there."

'Top Pak players over-reacted by pulling out'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Top Pakistan players Aisam-ul-haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan "overreacted" by pulling out of the Davis Cup tie against India, said coach Zeeshan Ali on Friday and questioned why they did not boycott their earlier matches at neutral venues.

After much suspense over the venue for the Asia/Oceania tie, the ITF finally moved the matches out of Islamabad on November 4.

The decision did not go down well with the top Pakistan players and they decided not to compete in Nur-Sultan against India.

"I feel Aisam and Aqeel just overreacted by deciding not to play this tie. They did not need to do it. It's the ITF which moved the tie out of Islamabad, though we had our reasons to request ITF the same," Zeeshan said after a practice session.

LOCAL EVENTS

YASHASVI SLAMS TON IN INDIA U-19 WIN

In-from Yashasvi Jaiswal slammed an unbeaten ton to help India U-19 crush Afghanistan U-19 by nine wickets in the opening ODI of the series at Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana International Stadium on Friday. Put in to bat first, Afghanistan were bundled out for 171 runs in 47.1 overs.

Sediqullah Atal (32), Abdul Rehman Rehmani (30) and Rahmanullah Zardari (29) were the major contributors. Yashasvi and Ravi claimed two scalps each. In reply, Yashasvi slammed 108 runs in just 83 balls with the help of 16 boundaries and four sixes. Arjun Azad (29) and Tilak Verma (29*) played the second fiddle.



LUCKNOW EDGE PAST VARANASI

Lucknow edged past Varanasi 2-1 in a league match of the State-Level Sub-Junior Boys' Hockey Tournament at Mohd Shahid Stadium on Friday. Earlier, Sports College, Safai spanked Aligarh 12-0 while Kanpur blanked Dewipatan 3-0. In other matches of the day, Moradabad, Saifai Hostel, Rampur Hostel and Basti easily won their respective matches against Saharnpur, Bareilly, Dewipatan, Azamgarh and Saharnpur.

DPS, EXCELLIA LEADING

DPS, Eldeco and Excellia School are leading the tally in the U-10 and U-12 categories respectively on the first day of Excellia Inter-School Chess Championship on Friday. 18 teams from various schools are taking part in the team championship. In under 14 and U-18 categories, Study Hall and DPS, Eldeco were leading respectively.

Earlier, Excellia School director Asheesh Pathak and principal Sonia Vardhan inaugurated the championship.



CHESS TOURNEY

The 2nd Precision Rapid Chess Tournament will be played at Precision Chess Academy on Sunday. Interested may contact on 9839001533.

TEAM ANNOUNCED

The Lucknow University team for the North Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament, to be held at Aligarh has been announced on Friday.

THE TEAM: Rajeev Ratan, Mohd Saad, Akhilesh Yadav, Bhupendra Singh, Rohit Bahadur, Akshat Mishra, Kanha, Harshit Tiwari, Pushpendra Singh, Vishal Lamba, Ravi Bangari, Anshit Shukla, Prabal Pratap, Abhishek Bhatt, Ibrar Ali, Aditya Singh; **Reserves:** Vivek Singh, Arya Srivastava, Anesh Singh, Mohd Asif.

INTER-SCHOOL CRICKET

Indian Games and Sports Society is organising Inter-School IGSS Cricket Tournament from November 23 to 28. The matches will be played at IISE and NR grounds.

TEAMS: LPS, Tender Heart, City International, St Fidelis, New Public Academy, Awadh Educational Academy, SR Global, Rasfil Academy, Kanossa School, Oyster Academy, St Anthony's College, Horner's College and Montfort College.

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Bangladesh won the toss and India everything else against a ball they are not acquainted with on the first day of their maiden Day/Night Test, the quality of contest spectacularly failing to match the manic pre-match hype.

First the Ishant Sharma-led Indian pace unit terrorised the visitors, bundling them out for 106 in just under 31 overs before twilight set in.

With two of their batsmen concussed, the mentally-scarred Bangladesh attack then found itself at the receiving end of a masterclass from the Indian captain Virat Kohli, who remained unbeaten on 59 off 93 balls, as India reached 174 for three at stumps on the opening day.

The stodgy Cheteshwar Pujara, with two pink ball hundreds under his belt in first-class cricket, scored a chiselled 55 as India took a 68-run lead. It looks like the cricket loving Kolkata public will not have an opportunity to witness even three full days' action.

The city turned pink, the crowd responded to the brainchild of its favourite son Sourav Ganguly, who arranged a first-of-its-kind match in less than a month's time.

However, the gulf in standards along with the singular lack of intent from the visitors took some sheen away from the game.

Earlier, Ishant grabbed his first five-wicket haul on Indian soil after a good 12 years, finishing with 5 for 22 in 12 overs after a brave decision by opposition captain Mominul Haque to bat first on a seamer-friendly pitch.

Umesh Yadav hurried the Bangladeshi batsmen for pace with 3 for 29 in 7 overs while Mohammed Shami was deadly bowling the cutters wide off the crease with figures of 2 for 36 in 10.3 overs.

He also bowled two sharp bouncers, leaving Liton Das (24) and Nayeem Hasan (19) concussed.

Bangladesh lasted just 30.3 overs in their first innings with specialist spinners Ravindra Jadeja bowling a solitary over and Ravichandran Ashwin wasn't even required to roll his arms over.

Clearly the menacing Indian pace attack exposed Bangladesh's lack of technical finesse as the 'Pink Ball Test' was agreed upon three days before their tour departure on the initiative of newly-elected BCCI president Sourav Ganguly.

Bangladesh batsmen looked unsettled by the capacity crowd, something they have never encountered even in their home Tests and the world-class bowling made it even more difficult.

Such was their plight that for the first time in the subcontinent, batsmen Nos 3, 4 and 5 (skipper Mominul Haque, Mohammad Mithun, and senior-most player Mushfiqur Rahim) were all dismissed for a duck.

Pushed into the unknown territory without any practice back home, Bangladesh opening duo of Shadman Islam and Imrul Kayes survived some anxious moments in the first six overs before Ishant Sharma trapped the latter.

Umesh then triggered the collapse in his second spell with two wickets in three balls, first being skipper Mominul who was dismissed by a beautiful diving one-handed catch by Rohit Sharma.

Next was Mohammed Mithun

Ishant in Pink mode

Senior pacer's 2nd 5-wicket haul in India (first in 12 years) helps all-round India lord over Bangladesh, hype beats cricket hands down



Ishant Sharma celebrates after taking wicket of Bangladesh batsman during first day of first Day/Night Test between India and Bangladesh at Eden Gardens in Kolkata

India vs B'desh (2nd day)
Live from 1:00pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1

beating him by pace as it sharply cut in with the batsmen playing on to his stumps.

Despite the catching scepticism surrounding the pink ball, Saha looked a class act behind the stumps as usual as the ball was swinging a lot after moving the batsman.

His low catch of Mahmudullah, outstretched and dragged across Virat Kohli at the first slip, was the highlight of his keeping as he also completed a milestone of 100 dismissals in longest format.

While Bangladesh captain Mominul had a point when he spoke about lack of preparation but when Kohli with barely one and a half net session hit those elegant boundaries under light, one knew why a solid basic technique made such a difference.

With a quick trigger, Kohli would cover the line and negate the seam movement hitting those languid cover drives with grace.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who was not supposed to play this game, came in as a concussion substitute for Nayeem Hasan, was driven down the ground as if it was net session.

Pujara on the otherhand also looked solid after quick departure from Mayank Agarwal and Rohit Sharma, adding 94 runs for the third wicket with his captain.

Das, Nayeem concussed

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Two Bangladesh batsmen — Liton Das and Nayeem Hasan — were retired hurt from the ongoing Day/Night Test, forcing the visitors to bring in as concussion substitutes players who had been dropped from the team. Both Das and Nayeem were hit by Mohammed Shami snorters and were replaced by Mehidy Hasan and Taijul Islam at the Eden Gardens.

Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batsman Das was taken to a city hospital for a scan before another Shami delivery hit Nayeem, who was interestingly attended to by Indian team physio Nitin Patel.

Bangladesh, thus, became the first team to make two concussion substitutes in a Test match.

Mehidy came in as concussion substitute after Das was hit.

However, Mehidy, an off-spinner, will not be allowed to bowl as per the concussion substitute rule. Mehidy, though, did not last long as he was dismissed by pacer Ishant Sharma for just eight runs.



Nayeem Hasan stands as physiotherapists look into the helmet after he was injured

Das was retired hurt after being hit on his head at the stroke of lunch.

Trying to play a pull short off a Shami bouncer, the heavily-lacquered pink ball blazed in and hit his helmet in the forehead region in the third ball of the 20th over. He was batting on 16 then.

The physio rushed in, conducted a test and he continued batting, responding with a boundary in the next delivery.

Das hit another boundary in the next over off Ishant and

added nine runs before complaining of discomfort. He was next seen walking off the field after a long conversation with the umpire, forcing the end of the first session.

Das' like-for-like substitute Saif Hassan is down with a (split webbing) injury, forcing the visitors to opt for Mehidy as concussion substitute.

According to the protocol, a proper medical report has to be submitted to the match referee for a concussion substitute.

Hasina, Mamata ring bell



Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, center right, and Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee, center left, stand to ring the Eden Bell to start the 2nd Test

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee rung the customary Eden bell in the presence of BCCI President Sourav Ganguly, Bangladesh Cricket Board chief Nazmul Hasan Papon and batting legend Sachin Tendulkar among other dignitaries.

Hasina and Mamata met the teams before the national anthem was played by the Army Band in front of a packed house. Union Home Minister Amith Shah, who was supposed to be in attendance, however could not make it.

The historic match was supposed to kickstart with Army paratroopers flying into Eden to hand over a pink ball each to the two captains just before the toss. But due to security reasons, that

had to be cancelled at the last moment by the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB).

The other former cricketers present were S Ramesh, Saba Karim, Sunil Joshi, Ajit Agarkar, Venkatesh Prasad, Kapil Dev, Dilip Vengsarkar, Mohammed Azharuddin, Kris Srikkanth, Farokh Engineer and Chandu Borde.

Athletes from other sports like Abhinav Bindra, P. Gopichand, PV Sindhu, Sania Mirza and Mary Kom were also there.

Naimur Rahman, Mohammed Mahmudul Hasan, Maharab Hossain, Mohammed Hassibul Hussain, Shahriar Hossain Biddut, Kazi Habibul Bashar and Mohammed Akram Khan were the former Bangladeshi cricketers who were present.

Captain Kohli fastest to 5K

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Virat Kohli on Friday became the fastest to 5000 runs as captain, completing the feat in 86 innings during day one.

As captain, Kohli was also the quickest to 4000 Tests runs (65 innings). He is the sixth captain to reach the 5000-run mark.

Australian great Ricky Ponting had taken 97 innings to complete 5000 runs as captain, ahead of West Indian legend Clive Lloyd (106 innings), South African Graeme Smith (110), Australian Allan Border (116) and New Zealand's Stephen Fleming (130).



Legends relive glorious Eden moments



India's former cricket players Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh and VVS Laxman join in a talk show during break on 1st day

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Indian cricket legends including Sachin Tendulkar and Anil Kumble on Friday revisited their glorious on-field moments at the Eden Gardens.

In a special programme during the lunch break on the opening day, Tendulkar, Kumble, Harbhajan Singh and VVS Laxman relived some of the iconic moments at the famous venue here, including the 1993 Hero Cup final versus West Indies and the 2001 Test versus Australia.

All of them thanked their captain and BCCI president Sourav Ganguly for bringing them together. Ganguly, too, was supposed to be part of the 40-minute discussion on Star Sports but could not make it as he was understandably caught up with administrative issues.

"We have not had a chance to sit like this since our playing days. It is a special day and there could not have

been a better venue for this historic game," said Kumble, whose sensational spell of six for 12 helped India to a famous win over West Indies.

The Kolkata crowd is probably the most passionate in the country and they showed all their love for Tendulkar by chanting 'Sachin Sachin', taking the master blaster back to his playing days.

While Laxman and Rahul Dravid produced a match-winning 376-run stand after India followed on against Australia, Harbhajan and Tendulkar came up with stellar bowling performances. Harbhajan even took a hat-trick in his match haul of 13 wickets.

"The game changed so quickly because of that hat-trick. The way we won the game ushered in a new phase for the Indian team. Bhajji was sensational, got Ricky Ponting out so many times and Laxman and Dravid partnership did wonders for the confidence of the dressing room," said Tendulkar.

The electric atmosphere at the Eden Gardens reminded Harbhajan of his playing days.

"The atmosphere here takes me back to 15 years ago. Test cricket was different back then. It is a special feeling and I feel so much love every time I come here. Hats off to Ganguly for doing this. Even if I play under 100 captains, he will always be my captain," said the champion off-spinner.

Tendulkar had heard good things about Harbhajan from the local officials during a game in Mohali and, subsequently, asked for the spinner to bowl to him in the India nets. Harbhajan, a teenager then, was in awe of Tendulkar.

"The first time I met Bhajji was in Mohali. The people there were talking about him, 'he is a good spinner who bowls a good doosra'," said Tendulkar.



An illuminated building displays an image of BCCI President Sourav Ganguly, on the eve of the 1st pink-ball Test, B'desh PM Sheikh Hasina and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee meet players



Ganguly posts picture of 'Sweets go pink in Kolkata' via Twitter



Indian cricketer Mithali Raj rides in a cart during a grand parade of India's former cricket captains; (right) Sourav Ganguly posts picture with Eden crowd during first day of Day/Night Test

